Jimmy Carter: The Challenge of Victory *The Editors*

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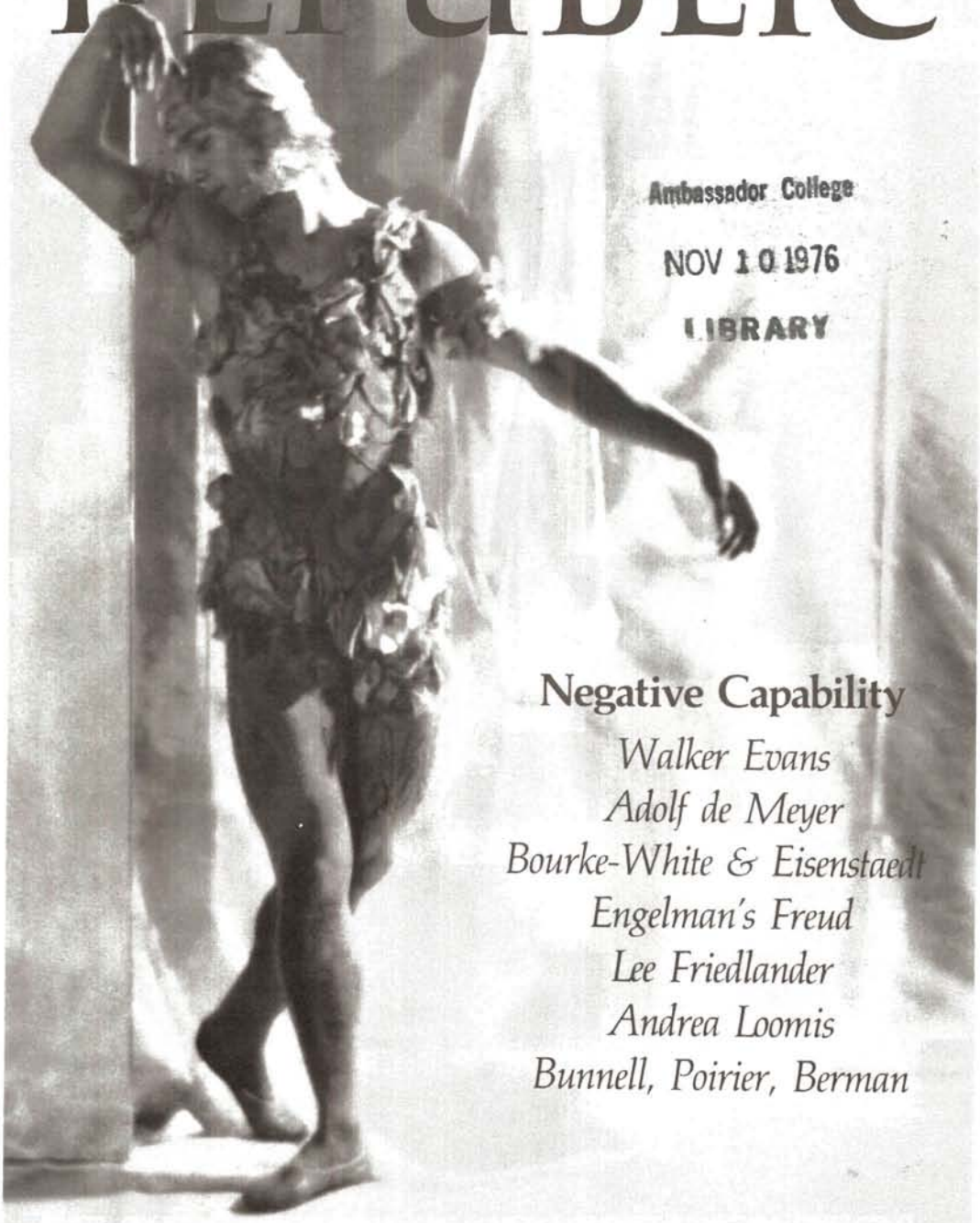

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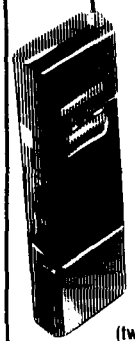

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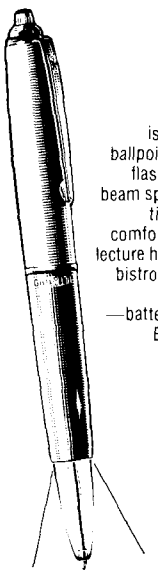

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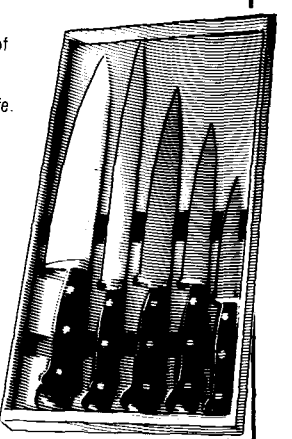

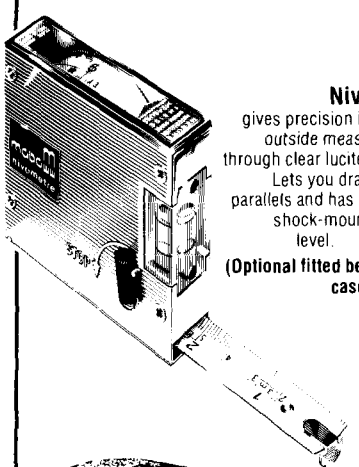

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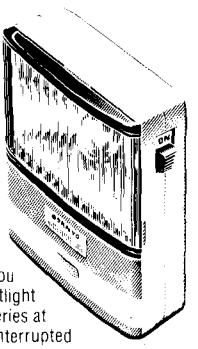

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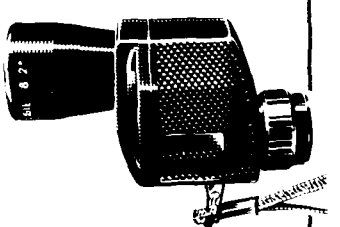

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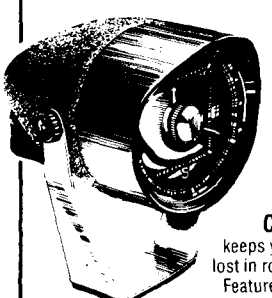

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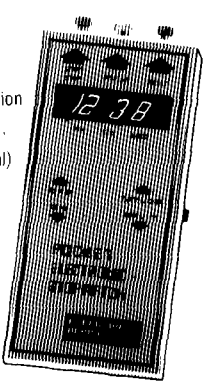

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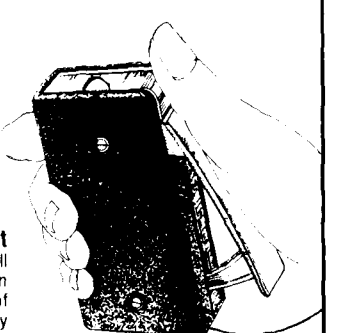

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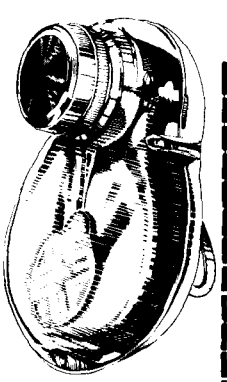

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from Washington ®
November 13, 1976

Gracious Interval

John Adams didn't wait for the inaugural after Jefferson beat him for the presidency; when the day came he slipped out of the brand new White House and the drab little capital in his coach at four in the morning. Fourteen days later he reached Quincy, Massachusetts having, as he wrote, "trotted the bogs five hundred miles." He couldn't bear the chagrin of seeing his rival sworn in, and Jefferson walked quietly over to the Capitol from Conrad's boarding house to take the oath by himself. That was 1801.

We like the gracious things President Ford and President-elect Carter are saying to each other now. It makes us all a little taller. On January 20 the two of them will ride up Pennsylvania Avenue between crowds and you won't know by their faces what mean things the President was recently saying about his rival, or that Carter called Ford "weak, timid, vacillating and unable to lead." They will preserve this courtesy because they are gentlemen. And because they love their country.

The late, great managing editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, O.K. Bovard, once instructed a brash young Washington correspondent who was writing flippantly about such another inaugural ride, "Young man, when you write about that I want you to *lift your hat*!" He explained that the ride represented one of the better things in our democracy. Looking back on it all we can't see that the campaign issues were drowned in trivialities as some assert. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. had a hard time of it; in the end he voted for Carter, he reported, but exclaimed in *The Wall Street Journal*, "what an abysmal, demeaning, offensive, empty campaign on both their parts. What a hell of a way to celebrate the Bicentennial!"

Presidential candidates have a language of their own; it is true that Carter and Ford are hardly charismatic figures, but experience has taught politicians that it is unwise to sharpen the issues too much. Nixon said almost nothing in 1972 and got a landslide from McGovern, who tried to be specific; so did Stevenson and Goldwater—they got clobbered, too. Our system puts a premium on ambiguity.

One encouraging aspect was the kneejerk reaction from the stock market when Carter won. Wall Street seemed to have understood the election. We had gone out the day before and voted for the man who promised never to lie, mislead or deceive us, and wondered if after all there was any real difference between the candidates. Then next day the stock market had a gratifying tizzy and dropped nine points. Not that we want the market to fall, but we have never known a time when Wall Street knew where its bread was buttered; Mr. Ford and his Hoover-minded economic advisers have created inflation, recession and decline, all at once, yet top business leaders are all for him, just as they all hated Roosevelt in the '30s when he was saving the free enterprise system.

We shall argue about this election for years. If the campaign had lasted another two weeks would Ford have won? If McCarthy had been on all the ballots would he have tipped it? In a squeaker like this practically every supporting group, and particularly the blacks, can claim they put Carter over.

We got a greeting from Ronald Reagan just before the election that further alerted us about Jimmy Carter. Addressing us as "Dear Friend," he confided, "I am terribly concerned that the liberals and left wing elements in our country are going to capture both the Congress *and* the White House this year." Then he made his revelation: "And make no mistake about it—Jimmy Carter is a liberal." He made these intimate disclosures to us just before the election, and in a postscript (in blue longhand) he generously offered to mail us his book if we contributed $15 to his new right wing action group in the next fortnight. Signed, "R.R."

It makes us wonder what will happen to the Grand Old Party. R.R.'s worst apprehensions have come true. Democrats control the Senate, House, most of the governorships, and the White House. The tough crew behind Reagan seems to be spearheaded by Richard Viguerie, the direct-mail specialist who was chief fundraiser for Wallace before Wallace supported Carter. Viguerie says "the Republican party is an institutional disaster."

There's a 10-week transition period now before peanut farmer Jimmy Carter takes the oath of office next January 20 on the steps of the Capitol, and it is one of the most interesting intervals in America's extraordinary government. In this long lag when nothing appears to happen, most parliamentary governments could call an election, go to the people, count the ballots and finish it—with a fortnight to spare. We don't hurry like that. Mr. Carter will appoint his liaison man with the White House on foreign affairs, very likely the next Secretary of State. He will watch the economic indicators and the stock market. He will roam around for his cabinet: Eisenhower picked his cabinet by December 1; Nixon, December 11; Kennedy, December 17.

The President-elect may announce that his cabinet will be available to answer questions in Congress. Fritz Mondale recommended this before he ever thought of running for Vice President, in his book *The Accountability of Power*. And Jimmy Carter (we are reminded by Professor Philippa Strum, of Brooklyn College) said the same thing in his *Why Not the Best*: "I believe that it would be helpful here to have members of the cabinet appear before joint sessions of the Congress to answer written and verbal questions, preferably with live television coverage for the whole nation to view." We shall see.

The most interesting thing for Washington—and for the nation of course—is whether Jimmy Carter can handle his new job, or will blow it. There have been only three times like this in the century, as we figure—an activist liberal President, a big majority in Congress of his own party, and a huge pile-up of backed up social needs. Wilson was the first; FDR second; Kennedy-Johnson third. For 14 of the past 22 years there has been divided government in Washington. This includes the last eight. The economy is in such shape that Lawrence Klein, Carter's top economic adviser, says it shouldn't wait until January 20 for federal stimulus. What happens? Maybe the election was dull—it should pick up from here on.

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The Challenge Of Victory

The honeymoon has at last begun for Jimmy Carter, and it is well-deserved. No one in our history has pursued the prize with greater ardor; no one has come so far so fast. But temporary absolution is bestowed by the press and the opposition on every President-elect. It was even granted Richard Nixon by so passionate an antagonist as Herblock. The noted *Washington Post* cartoonist had for a decade and a half evoked Nixon's malevolence in a face threateningly beetle-browed and darkened by five o'clock shadow. As Nixon prepared to occupy the oval office, however, Herblock appeared willing to see him in a new way. Under a cartoon drawing of a barber shop—complete with striped pole, lay-back chair, shaving mug and straight razor—ran the caption, "This barber shop offers a free shave to every new President of the United States."

Jimmy Carter needs no comparable cosmetic relief, which is perhaps only to say that unlike Nixon, Carter does not have a black record that must be wiped clean. That alone is an accomplishment, after a campaign that lasted nearly two years and became quite bitter in the final weeks. There is nothing in Carter's record—however enigmatic it may be—to suggest that he undertakes the presidency with anything less than utmost seriousness and concern for reconstituting public trust in government.

For some months now, a small task force based in Atlanta has been quietly drawing blueprints for the transition to a new administration. Some commentators thought this a reflection of Carter's *hubris*, particularly in the light of his stark decline in the polls during September and October. Maybe the critics were right; but the voters have now vindicated Carter's confidence in himself. In any case, governing is not easy, nor is staffing an administration a simple chore. So we may be grateful for Carter's orderly and meticulous traits which have had him and his staff, in the heat of partisan battle, already lavishing attention on the particulars of how they would shape America's future.

We have argued on several occasions that Carter has not adequately shared his intentions—on policy and personnel—with the American people. We still believe it would deepen the meaning of the democratic process if the party and candidate out of power were to campaign as something more like an alternative government than a moving shell

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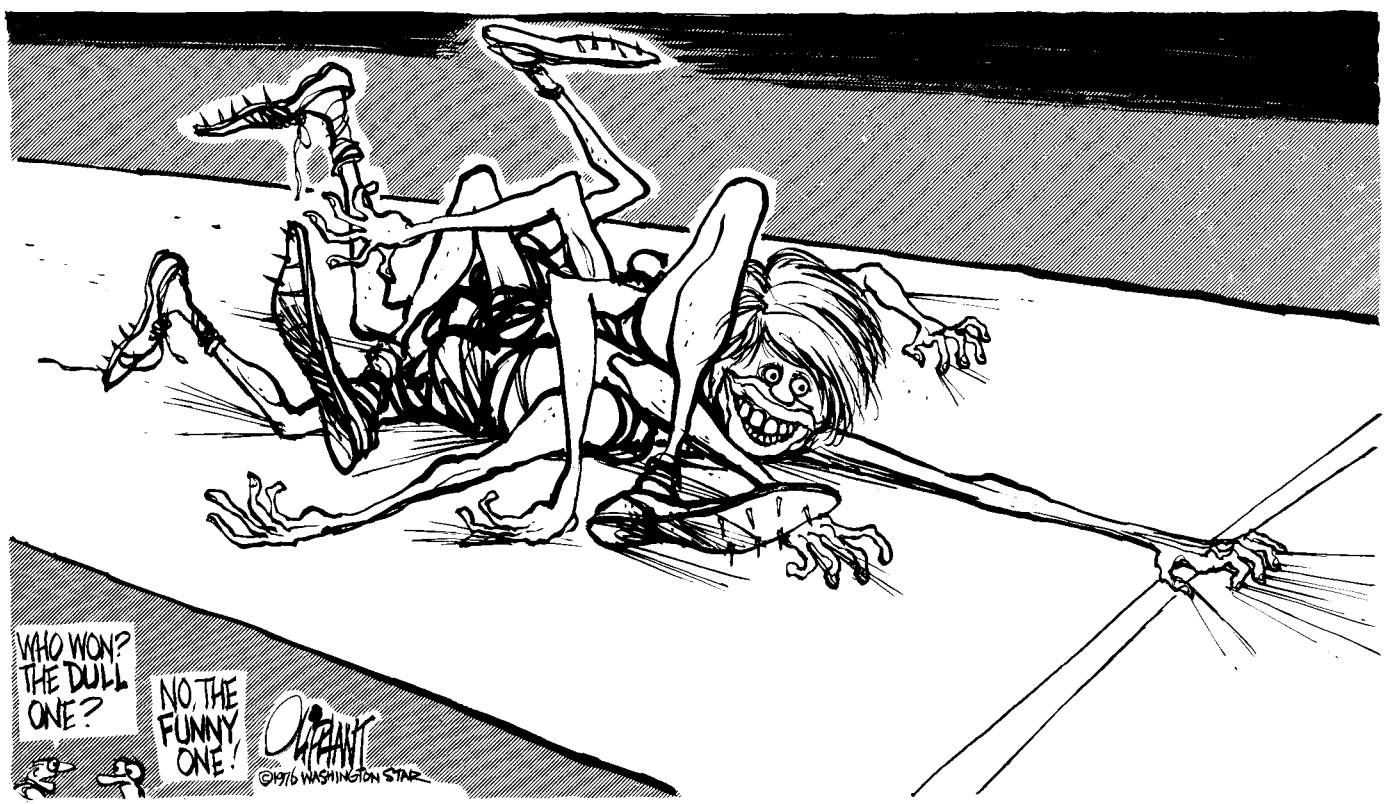
game. That is history. The people have decided—but by very slim margins—that they knew enough about Ford and his entourage to choose Carter, all the mysteries notwithstanding. Among those mysteries was the character of Carter's inner circle of early devotees. Inevitably, that circle will widen. What are we to expect as that happens? Will it resemble the fractious, rambunctiously outspoken band that FDR assembled? Or the technocrats, academics and crisis managers who accompanied JFK to Washington? Or the cronies and sycophants whom Richard Nixon gathered around his phobic self? Probably, perhaps unavoidably, the new guard will be a mixture of all three—yes, even some of the last. What will matter is the final balance. The evidence will be coming in soon.

Carter's mandate is not a personal one. There were no coattails. On the contrary: he was pulled through in several critical states by senatorial candidates like Pat Moynihan in New York, Howard Metzenbaum in Ohio, Spark Matsunaga in Hawaii. To be sure, the foundation of Carter's electoral triumph was the near solid South. As a native son he was able to break moderate whites of their recently acquired Republican habit. This gave Carter his lopsided wins below the Mason-Dixon Line. But Carter's success would have been altogether inconceivable—in the general election no less than in the primaries—were it not for the enthusiastic outpouring of black voters who chose him over Ford in margins of five to one.

In the end Carter was also the clear choice of American liberals. That's not a surprise: there was nothing in the Republican administration to attract the progressive-minded. But the vice presidential nominations intensified the preference. Walter Mondale added a measure of grace and depth to a play scripted for banality. And, to the ticket whose popularity peaked on the day it was confirmed in convention, he also brought some steady and steadying conviction. He was solace to those liberals who, for reasons good and bad—the bad ones being mostly Northern provincialism—, couldn't identify with the man in the top spot. Mondale's appeal probably accounts for the near evaporation of Eugene McCarthy's strength on election day (though McCarthy may have cost Carter Iowa, Maine, Oregon, Oklahoma, and just possibly California). Louis Harris estimated that it was actually Mondale who tipped the scales to the Democrats. To the extent that this is true, it might help liberate the liberals from the apologetic posture they have assumed in response to the conservative offensive of the last years. It also seems apparent that Robert Dole's particularly mean-spirited brand of political and economic conservatism is not really very popular. He added exactly nothing to the ticket, not even in his own state of Kansas where the Republicans did no better and no worse than they ordinarily do. It should be a useful lesson for the future of the Republican party that this sneering ideological enforcer turned out to be such a drag on Ford's incumbency.

The most significant component of the Carter alliance was the lunch-bucket vote. It did not, of course, go overwhelmingly for Carter; but the Republicans had expected more unionized workers to defect from the Democratic party, continuing the trend that began in the Nixon years. This did not happen. Carter's success owes a good deal to the work of trade union leaders,



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who fought in their own ranks against the ill-defined fears and vague resentments that Ford mobilized—the cornerstone of Republican strategy in the big industrial states. The Carter margins in Detroit, Philadelphia and New York echo the simple and resounding cadence of "jobs, jobs, jobs."

It would be misleading to conclude that Carter has actually revived FDR's New Deal coalition. But he demonstrated that the issues and values that animated it still have vitality. Moreover, they continue to motivate the social and ethnic groups that comprised it. Like blacks, for example, Jewish voters remained faithful to the Democratic party for many of the old reasons—and also, no doubt, because they believed Carter's quite precise pledges not to undermine the security of Israel. Yet it is doubtful whether, the Middle East aside, foreign policy counted for much in this election. That may be because the rhetoric was at once furious and contradictory. It has been especially difficult to read Jimmy Carter on foreign policy; there were no clear marching orders from him to his legions—or, for that matter, from them to him.

The challenge to Jimmy Carter's imagination and skill that derives from the circumstances of his election lies in domestic policy. To be sure, here and there for local reasons, liberal voter initiatives and referenda went down to defeat. A handful of liberal senators and congressmen—Senators Tunney of California and Hartke of Indiana, and Representative Mezvinsky of Iowa are instances—were not returned to Washington. But the liberal class of '74 in the House survived almost intact, and prominent liberal leaders like Robert Drinan of Massachusetts, marked especially for extinction by the Republican right, scored striking victories. There were other gratifications: William Brock of Tennessee, who defeated Albert Gore six years ago in a particularly ugly campaign, has now himself been retired. The 1976 election also put Albert Gore, Jr. into the House. The mills of the gods grind slowly.

The great stunner of this election is what happened to all those voters whom the pollsters had told us were intent on sitting this one out. Those "lowest levels of voter turnout in half-a-century" predictions collapsed as soon as the sun came up in the East—though not nearly so completely as the media first led us to believe. The turnout was high, but not *that* high (only 53 percent of the voting-age public). One thing is clear: people who had been apathetic or indifferent to the campaign but came out on November 2 to vote for Jimmy Carter did not want a continuation of Gerald Ford's stubborn commitment to social neglect and economic callousness. But it should also be clear that they did not distrust Gerald Ford *in the abstract* nor did they trust Jimmy Carter *in the abstract*. They went for Carter—trusted him—because they expect a Democratic administration to move decisively against the constricted Republican vision of what government can do to make society just. If Carter can define his own more generous vision, he is likely to find the Democratic Congress eager to cooperate with him. But if he backs and fills, moves forward and retreats on the priorities of the day, Congress will neither be challenged to meet its responsibilities nor assume leadership on its own. We will be back to politics as usual, which would not be good news at all. Jimmy Carter can make a place in history for himself equal to his ambitions if he is as bold as the constituency that has formed behind him.

Broadway Tries Diplomacy

One night last month, following a performance of their play, *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*, in the town of Butterworth in the Transkei, John Kani and Winston Ntshona were arrested, separated, placed in solitary detention and denied contact with their families and legal counsel.

Kani and Ntshona are well known in America through their parts in *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead* and *The Island*, two remarkable plays they created in collaboration with Athol Fugard, the respected white South African playwright. These two-character pieces dramatize the effect of apartheid in achingly human terms, and drew powerful responses from audiences during a US tour in 1974 and 1975. Kani and Ntshona were jointly voted the 1975 Tony Award, the Broadway theater's equivalent of the Academy Award, for their performances.

When a brief AP dispatch about the arrests appeared in the US press on October 12, alarm and indignation spread through the theatrical community. It went deeper than the usual disapproval that greets the political mistreatment of foreign colleagues. Many of us know Kani and Ntshona personally and have affection for them and admiration for the moral honesty of their work.

Although formal charges were never filed, Kani and Ntshona were arrested for allegedly inserting remarks into a performance of *Sizwe Banzi* that were scornful of the then imminent "independence" of the Transkei from the Republic of South Africa, a reflection of the view of most South African blacks that the Pretoria government's creation of separate black states is aimed at sustaining apartheid and white minority rule. All

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Carter in transit

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over New York on October 12, in Broadway producers' offices, rehearsal halls, union halls and among experimental and black theater groups, the arrests were angrily discussed. A sustained public protest had to be raised at once.

Since the Transkei has no representative in the US, we contacted Vere G. Stock, the South African Consul General in New York, and expressed our shock. He claimed that the matter had nothing to do with his government since the Transkei was autonomous and would be independent in two weeks' time, on October 26, but agreed to cable to Pretoria our formal protest for the theater profession. We told him to expect demonstrators in front of the Park Avenue office building that houses the consulate.

At noon on October 14, nearly 500 actors, playwrights, directors, designers, critics, producers and other theater artisans marched for two hours in front of the South African consulate building. The demonstration had been organized within 48 hours of the news of the arrests, and many of the marchers interrupted their work to participate. The presence of Mike Nichols, Lynn Redgrave, Abe Burrows, Al Pacino, Ossie Davis and Theodore Bikel, president of Actors Equity Association, helped to attract wide media coverage. We agreed to maintain a full-time picket line outside the consulate, a decision that severely discomfited the South African government. Stock complained to me bitterly about it several times, and asked the State Department to intercede with us.

At a meeting on October 20 in New York's Edison Theater, where Kani and Ntshona had performed, plans were made for a massive demonstration near the United Nations on October 26, under the chairmanship of Don Grody, executive secretary of Equity. Letters urging participation went to thousands of theater union members. A large display ad outlining the actors' plight and inviting the public to join the demonstration was prepared for insertion in *The New York Times*.

Shortly thereafter Norman Kean, one of the New York producers of *Sizwe Banzi* and *The Island*, succeeded in reaching George Matanzima, the Transkei minister of justice and the brother of Chief Kaiser Matanzima, the prime minister. Matanzima told Kean he was aware of the agitation in New York but would not be "bribed" into accepting "subversion" of the sort Kani and Ntshona had attempted. He was vague about details like charges and bail, but promised to "expedite" the case. (His brother, the prime minister, had already been informed of the US protest by William Bowdler, our ambassador to South Africa.)

On October 22, as the scope of the demonstration plans widened, rumors circulated that Kani and Ntshona had been released. Stock phoned me in triumph: "You can call off your dogs," he said. "They're out." I replied that the picketing and demonstration would proceed until we spoke to Kani and Ntshona directly, at their homes in Port Elizabeth. Later that day Kean spoke to Mlahleni Njisane, the prime minister's chief aide, in Umtata, the Transkei capital. After Njisane told him that Kani and Ntshona had *not* been released, Kean elaborated on our demonstration plans and pleaded for the actors' release before Independence Day. Njisane promised to convey the message to Chief Matanzima but was otherwise noncommittal.

It was not until the next morning that Kean received a personal phone call from John Kani and Winston Ntshona, speaking from Port Elizabeth. They had been freed the previous evening, shortly after Kean's conversation with Njisane. They had been treated "kindly" during their incarceration and were in good health. No charges were to be filed against them. Both men were "very grateful" to the men and women of the American theater who campaigned for their release.

We have no way of knowing what pressure may have been applied on the Transkei authorities by the South African government, or even by the State Department, which was sympathetic and helpful throughout. In any event, a victory has been won, even though it is still unclear if Kani and Ntshona will be permitted to perform their work in the Transkei again.

Alexander H. Cohen

Mr. Cohen is a theatrical producer in New York and London.

Where Are They Now?

New York Times sports columnist Red Smith was honored last month "by the Silurian Society of newspaper people. . . and inducted into the Madison Square Garden Hall of Fame. The columnist received a typewriter, which was presented by Alger Hiss, the former State Department official whose trial a quarter of a century ago featured a controversial typewriter. 'I was told that my sole purpose was to be a sight gag,' Hiss said, acknowledging that he had been a 'fan of Red Smith' for a long time. 'But the chance to throw out the first typewriter at this sports event is a great honor.'"—*The New York Times*, October 29.

Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek, widow of the Nationalist Chinese leader, has told the members of the Yuan, the Nationalist government's parliament, that she will return to Taiwan from the United States as soon as her health permits. "I shall return home to work for the big plan of recovering mainland China" from the Communists, Mrs. Chiang said in a letter to Le Heng, a woman legislator.

—*The New York Times*, November 4

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White House Watch

And So To Bed

Reporters who traveled with Gerald Ford on his last campaign trip began to suspect that he'd received some bad news about his chances of being elected President when he landed and spoke at Detroit's Metropolitan Airport on the afternoon before the election. With his wife Betty at his side, he marched straight from Air Force One to a microphone set up at the edge of the airport and read a brief statement. It was a plea to the people of Michigan to vote the next day for "the first son of Michigan to serve as President of the United States." It was not the plea itself, which was natural enough, but the sudden change from the strained and raucous style of the President's previous utterances that seemed strange. The President spoke in a low voice, in a tone of intense concern. At the end, he turned away from a cluster of reporters and cameramen and entered a White House limousine instead of pausing as he usually did at airports for a few questions and answers. His voice had cracked and fallen to a racking husk during the last two days at rallies in Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, contributing to the growing impression of a troubled candidate. At an election-eve rally in Grand Rapids, "the home that we love so much," tears were in his eyes and he was discernibly close to sobbing as he lapsed into uncharacteristically incoherent recollections of his 25 years in Congress as the representative of the Grand Rapids district—"taking that trailer down through Ottawa County, Ionia County, Kent County, and sitting and listening to wonderful people who had a problem, who wanted to give me a little trouble, give me a hard time—and they did—but also we had a couple of friends that might come in and say nice things about us." On election morning at the Grand Rapids airport, accepting a mural depicting his and his family's history, he broke into sobs as he recalled his father and mother and said with watery sentiment that he owed everything he was to them. It was all a bit off key, considering that he was born of another father in Omaha, Nebraska, hadn't lived in Grand Rapids for years and, according to Mrs. Ford, intended to retire to their home in Alexandria, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, when he left the presidency. By the time he returned to Washington in the early afternoon of election day, I was among the reporters in his press party who supposed that we had attended the collapse of the hope and illusion that he was going to be elected to the office that he'd held by appointment and succession since August 9, 1974.

I am told at the White House that this supposition was totally wrong. According to the White House account, which I find believable and summarize without further qualification, Mr. Ford had known since last July that his election would require a miracle. The campaign plan drawn up for him in July and ratified after his nomination in August pinpointed with remarkable accuracy the critical, big-vote states where he was behind and where he could hope to come from behind only if there was a very late turn of support from Jimmy Carter to him. One of the doubtful states was Michigan. The news in late October that his lead in a state poll there had dropped from eight points to three points within the month couldn't have been much of a shock to him. His soppy behavior in Michigan just before the election was in part a calculated appeal for sentimental support, in part a natural peaking of emotion in a district and state that he really did love. Right up to election day and election night, he wanted to win and expected to win. But he'd understood all along and understood at the finish that he might very well lose and had braced himself for defeat. Senior assistants and close friends had often been told how he felt about that prospect. After a quarter century in competitive politics at the national level—Congress is national, though the contests are statewide and local—he was always prepared to accept defeat and that was as true now as it had ever been. *Now Jimmy Carter—Jimmy was different. This was his first experience in national competition. Everybody knew that he was a hard loser, he was simply not prepared to accept defeat.* (Mr. Ford obviously had heard stories, often exaggerated, of the crushing impact upon Carter of his defeat for the Georgia governorship in 1966. He was devastated, but he recovered quickly.) *Carter's friends had better stay close, watch him closely, if he lost this election. From all the President had heard, it could take Jimmy Carter two years to recover from defeat.*

Reporters at the White House and at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, where thousands of supporters and the merely curious jammed a huge ballroom in the expectation that the President would appear either to hail victory or to acknowledge defeat, tended to think that the professions of continued hope in the early hours of Wednesday morning were artificial and silly. They were neither. Almost precisely as the President's July projection had predicted, the counted popular vote was running 51 percent to 48 percent when Mr. Ford went to bed at 3:15 a.m. The July projection had held forth the possibility but not a certainty that the higher percentage would be Ford's. Skeptical laughter greeted campaign chairman James Baker's pre-dawn assertion that a Ford victory was still "statistically feasible." It really was, though the hope of it occurring was very dim by then. Jack Germond, one of the country's best political reporters, calculated afterward in *The Washington Star* that shifts of 1500 votes in Ohio and 3500 votes in Hawaii, two of the six states that were undecided early Wednesday, would have given Mr. Ford a bare electoral vote majority of 270 to 268 for Carter. So it was that Mr. Ford was neither churlish nor foolish when he retired without acknowledging defeat and congratulating Jimmy Carter and also without appearing at the Sheraton

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Park, where the ballroom by three o'clock was a shambles of smashed plastic liquor glasses and weary hangers-on.

At 8:30 Wednesday morning the President's staff chief, Richard Cheney, met at the White House with the Ford campaign director, Stuart Spencer, and the chief Ford poller, Robert Teeter, among others. Upon the advice of Spencer and Teeter, the group agreed that there was no longer any chance of the electoral majority shifting from Carter to Ford. Mr. Ford was told and accepted this when he appeared in his office, somewhat refreshed but still haggard and barely able to speak, at 9:57 o'clock. The President, his wife and their daughter and three sons foregathered along with young Mike Ford's wife Gayle in the Oval Office and tearfully concluded that the time had come to admit defeat and congratulate President-elect James Earl Carter. A suitably warm and graceful telegram to "Dear Jimmy" was drafted, a telephone call was placed to Carter at his home in Plains, and the President husked out a few words of friendly congratulation to him. Richard Cheney read the telegram to Carter, with its promise of "my complete and wholehearted support as you take the oath of office this January " After what seemed to the assembled reporters to be an unconscionably long interval, the President and his family appeared in the White House press room. In a ghostly whisper, the President said a few words of greeting and asked Betty Ford to read a statement and the text of his telegram to Carter. This she did very softly. Her audience could see that she was close to weeping. She and the President pushed their way through the crowd of reporters, cameramen and TV-radio technicians, shaking hands and exchanging a few words with as many as they could reach. The Fords presumably took note of some journalists who were as near to tears as they were. When the family departed, Mrs. Ford led her daughter Susan by the hand. Susan, shoulders heaving, was quietly crying.

Throughout this episode, which could have been mawkish but was not, the President kept rigid control of himself. Once while Betty Ford was speaking he bit his lower lip. However much he had prepared himself for it, defeat had not come easily to him. Somewhere deep within himself, he must have been aware of the feeling among the tiny majority of voters who had preferred Carter to him that Jack Germond summarized as follows the day after the election: "Survey after survey showed that President Ford was the candidate they liked the most, trusted the most, considered the least political. But he was also the candidate whose capacity they doubted the most—and that was true from the first primary in New Hampshire last February 24 until yesterday." The outcome was a majority judgment, in short, that goodness and decency in the presidency are not enough. Let James Earl Carter, the psalm-singing sermonizer from Georgia, take heed.

John Osborne

Needed: Moral Information

Press Against Politics

by Henry Fairlie

At one point between about 3:30 and 4:00 a.m. on the morning of November 3, the voice of Walter Cronkite changed. After hours—and weeks—and months—of talking about Jimmy Carter as a candidate, he suddenly found himself using the words, "the President-elect." There may be no way of hushing the voice of Walter Cronkite, but there is no doubt that his voice becomes hushed by itself in the presence of immanent power. If one can imagine the late Cardinal Cushing at the manger of the infant Jesus—a picture that does require a considerable exercise of imagination—one has some idea of Walter Cronkite in the presence of sudden majesty.

It is only because Walter Cronkite in his ineffable glibness seems to me to summarize the faults of American journalism—print as well as television—that I use him as my object lesson. It is the American journalist's coverage of this election that is my subject.

I need to present one credential before arguing my point. Back in early spring I was the after-dinner speaker at a seminar in Washington, DC. The other speakers at the seminar had included some of the more

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prominent managers of all the candidates of both parties who were then in the primary races. At the end of my talk, I said that I thought that it was the duty of a political journalist to go out on a limb, to commit his own judgment without the aid of polls or computers; and so I went out on a limb. I said that Ford would defeat Reagan in the primaries, that Carter would defeat all his Democratic rivals, and that in the election Carter would defeat Ford.

There were low whistles from some of the audience; and the managers of Ronald Reagan and Henry Jackson pounced on me after my speech. I was out on my limb, and I will admit that in the intervening eight months there have been moments when I thought that it was being sawn off from under me. It was not really until Walter Cronkite was ready to give his unctuous blessing to the born-again king from Georgia that I could feel satisfied that my long-ago prediction was virginally immaculate.

I do not tell that story to boast; but to suggest that the American press and television news programs were this year guilty of the primary sin of American journalism: lack of commitment. When I say that a political journalist should go out on a limb, I mean that he should commit, not only his judgment, but his faith. He should himself make a choice, and from that commitment develop his own perceptions.

It does not matter whether he is Democrat or Republican—liberal or conservative, for Joe McCarthy or Gene McCarthy—he is worthless unless he cares enough to allow his passion to inform his judgment, his beliefs to discipline his observation. The political journalist ought to be the first into the ballot box; even if he loses. His judgment is useless unless it is regulated by passion. His real task is to uncover for other voters the glimpse of heaven which lies behind their mundane concerns. He cannot be objective. He must lay his hands on the child before it is enthroned in power.

Or withold his hands.

Of all the American columnists and commentators in this year's election, only one stands out as a man of dredging conviction and therefore truth. George Will is some kind of American conservative. He would prefer to have a genuine Republican party in office than a genuine Democratic party. Yet he never moved all year, either in print or on television, from an intellectually impassioned contempt for Gerald Ford. No matter how much of an ass Jimmy Carter sometimes made himself look, no matter how often the Democratic party was still obviously the party which he distrusted, George Will stuck to his own bitter truth about the inadequacy of Gerald Ford.

His advocacy therefore became its own form of accurate observation. What he was saying was that, in the end, by however small a margin of conviction, one simply could not take Gerald Ford for "four more years." If at any point during the election I had read a single sentence of his which suggested that he could stomach Gerald Ford, I would have had my own doubts about the ultimate success of Jimmy Carter. He was telling me something about the attitudes of a conservative mind in this election.

It is this lack of intellectually impassioned conviction that makes another kind of American conservative—James Jackson Kilpatrick—worthless to the point of professional fraudulence. He appears to be very conservative, very right wing; he certainly would have preferred a Reagan to a Ford, if he prefers anything that does not dissolve when touched. But once Ford had defeated Reagan, he was still gung-ho for the Republican party. To be "gung-ho," according to Webster's, is to be "extremely or overly zealous or enthusiastic." That is exactly what happens to the kind of intellectually unimpassioned political journalism that James Jackson Kilpatrick represents. He reaches for the lowest common denominator of political motive in those for whom he so grossly appears to speak. There is no conservatism in his journalism because he reaches always to what is most immediate and vulgar. If he met a saint, he would imagine that he or she was on his level.

And this affects his judgment. To coin a phrase—and it seems to me to be a phrase that is worth the coining—the real duty of the political journalist is to supply *moral information* from a coherent intellectual position: to supply it to the politicians on the one hand, and to the voters on the other. From a supposed conservative like James Jackson Kilpatrick there comes no moral information at all. There is something terrifyingly wrong in a political journalism that insists on making a sow's ear out of a silk purse.

There is even a perverted kind of worth in the conservative journalism of Robert Novak and Rowland Evans. Sheer malevolence of spirit must have some original value. There is something to be said for a column that allows one to settle over one's breakfast and say, even before one has read it, "Let's see how mean and small we can make the world look today." In fact, there is a kind of moral information in Evans and Novak. As we start to read their revelations of the shoddy—they would have reported the Virgin Birth by saying that in a secret meeting between Joseph and Mary in a Holiday Inn at Nazareth, Joseph had paid a Teamster to make Mary pregnant—we know that we are reading about everything in the political world which is unglorious, unmajestic, unlovely; and therefore turn to meet the day and find that it is not as ugly as they steadily assure us it will be.

What is more, in the moral information which they supply, there is again the kind of information that makes possible a prediction. As I said to a friend about 10 days before the election, "Once Evans and Novak are reduced to scurrying round California to find the evidence that Carter cannot win, one knows that Ford is certain to lose." The real value of their column is not so much that one knows in their hearts they are right,

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but that they are right in spite of themselves, somewhere down in their bowels.

But it has not been the conservative journalists who have most distorted this year's campaign; it has been the rest. The lack of moral information has been most evident in those who are supposed to be most liberally minded and anxiously concerned. It is not the talents or the worth of the following journalists that I am questioning, but the use to which they put their talents and their worth, their failure to supply moral information either to the candidates or the voters.

The fact is that once Mary McGrory found that there was no candidate this year over which she could break her heart, she stopped using her head.

The fact is that when Joseph Kraft at last came out with a whimper of an endorsement of Jimmy Carter, it was after eight months of almost consistent undermining of Carter's claims to any honesty or decency or intelligence at all. But a slippery endorsement of a candidate whom one has spent one's time making look slippery is perhaps some kind of moral information about the journalist's own perceptions.

The fact is that David Broder, who was once an acutely modest reporter of events, has become an immodest distributor of cynical opinions. He is like a monk who, when he at last has the courage to disrobe himself, finds that his energies have atrophied.

The fact is that James Reston writes now like a sports columnist on the slope of Olympus. When he gets around to telling us why we should—or should not—vote for Jimmy Carter it is as convincing as the National Zoo telling us why it bought a Bactrian breeding camel with no testicles.

The fact is that when Tom Wicker, at last and yet again, bares his soul and says that Carter should be supported, he makes his soul seem so superior to that of the candidates and the voters that one wonders why he does not just say that America is just one great Attica, and he is its warden.

The fact is that Anthony Lewis, after yapping at American society, its politics and politicians, year in and year out, suddenly on the day after the election found nothing less than "amazing grace" in Jimmy Carter's victory, a "special wonder" in Gerald Ford's concession, and a "deep poignance" in the whole process. As a colleague remarked, "It's enough to make one sick."

And so one could go on, through the "best and the brightest" of the journalists; and on television it is even worse than in print. The absence of moral information from the Cronkites, the Chancellors and the Reasoners—from the Brinkleys, the Sevareids, and the Smiths—is not only alarming, it is degrading. There comes no word from them to suggest that democracy is the accumulation of the moral aspirations and decisions of vexed but hopeful individuals, and that their task is to reinforce the process with their own intellectual commitment.

Everything about an election is reduced by them to so miserly an estimate of human motives that there can be no sense of the sheer hopefulness of a free people when they vote. Individuals are translated into units: that is all that they now know how to measure, humans as units measured by categories.

Since the journalists whom I am criticizing are among the best journalists we have, it seems to me necessary for us to confront what they will not confront in their situation: that it is not ultimately their own fault, that they are the nerveless victims of a system that is inescapably corrupting. If one really feared democracy, if one really feared the people, one would not waste time discrediting a Democrat as against a Republican, a liberal as against a conservative; one would simply discredit them all, candidates and voters. One would impute base motives to the politicians, and mundane motives to the people. One would teach them to despise themselves; one would instruct them to have contempt for the political process; one would make something—anything—look superior to the political motive: art, movies, sports, pornography, nature. It does not matter what the distraction, as long as it distracts; and always the purpose is the same, to leave the economic realm in command over all others, to explain all human impulse, as it is expressed in the political process, in terms of nothing more than the "acquisitive instinct."

There is no way in which the newspapers and television can ultimately escape from the fact that they are in bondage to an economic view of human aspiration against which they have no defense once the supremacy of the political realm has been surrendered. The individual journalists whom I have mentioned may be at fault, but they are among the best; and their primary fault is not to recognize or acknowledge that their—my—whole profession is trapped in a diminishing concept of human aspiration.

From the funeral oration of Pericles to the profoundly moving and graceful words of Jimmy Carter's acknowledgement of victory on the morning of November 3, the one realm in our existence which has released us to contend with the tyrannies of every other realm that matters to us—not least the economic realm of mere survival—has been the world of politics. It is not in an art gallery, not in a church, not on a stock exchange, not even in bed, that man is whole. It is in the ballot box.

To make my point, I would like to be allowed to be personal. My thesis in *The Kennedy Promise* has very often been misused. In fact, in its editorial on election day this year, the *Washington Star* quoted from my "wisdom" in that book to make it seem that I was arguing that the world of politics cannot really achieve very much. That was not my point. I criticized the politics of John Kennedy and, to a lesser extent, of Robert Kennedy, not because I think that politics should arouse no expectations, but because I think that they aroused the wrong expectations. I thought that I was defending the

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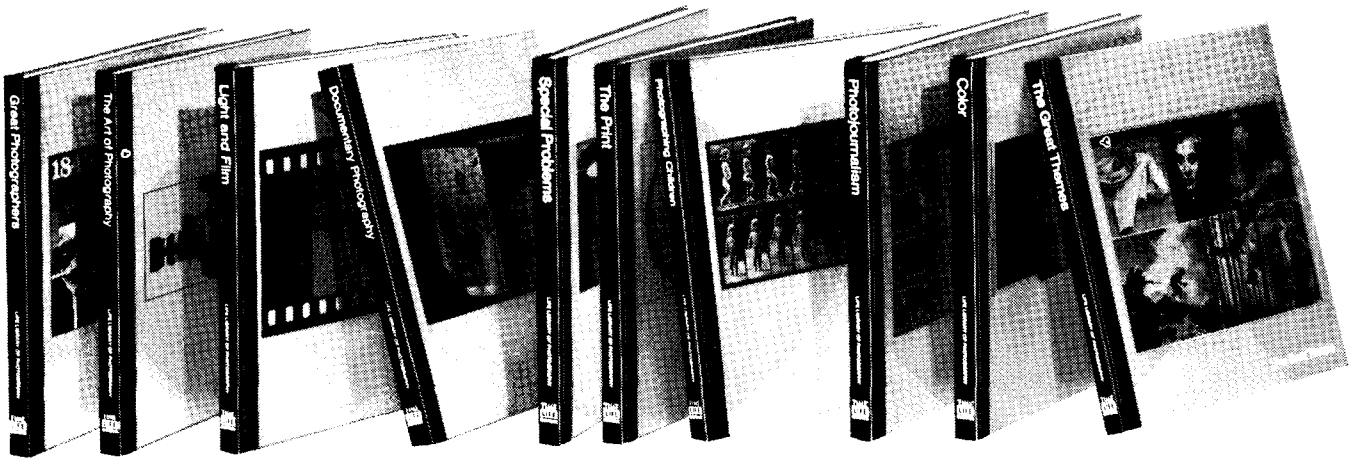

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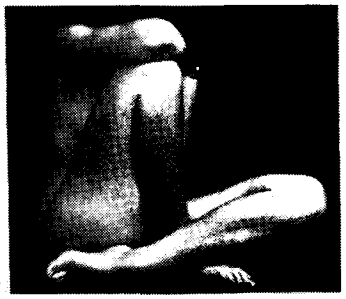

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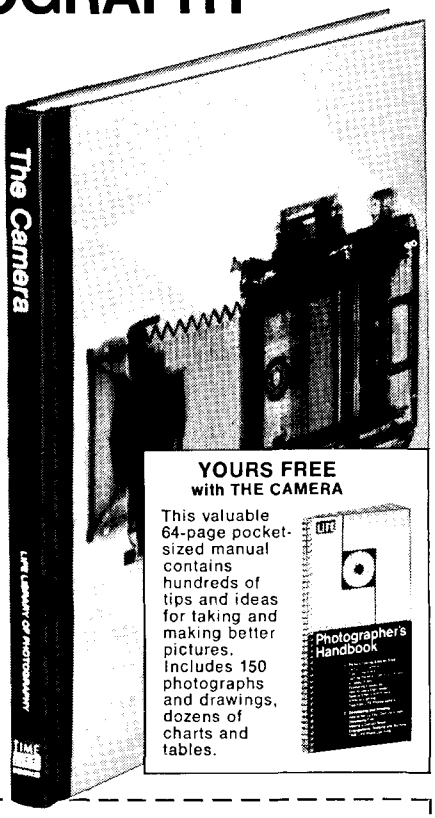

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world of politics against the Kennedys' misuse of it.

That is surely why I said in my conclusion that politics is not just the art of the possible, as is so often slyly said, and certainly is not the art of the impossible, as the Kennedys tried to practice it; but that it is *the art of the necessary*. There are necessary things to be done which only politics can do.

We have no other defense now against the dominance of the economic realm than the determination of the political world to assert itself. The task of the political journalist—and of the newspapers or television companies which employ him—is to strengthen that assertion. He may criticize an individual politician; he has no right to diminish the political function. He has no more right to do so than an art critic in criticizing an individual artist, has the right to diminish the function of art, or a music critic, in criticizing an individual composer, has the right to diminish the function of music.

Frank Mankiewicz is among the more experienced, more intelligent, more decent, more hoping men who are active in the political world. A few days before this year's election he said that the press and television had made it seem that no candidate ever advocated anything for any other reason than that it would win him votes. He is right. If Jimmy Carter said in Pittsburgh that he wished to reduce unemployment, the television reporter automatically said, "Jimmy Carter made another pitch for the blue-collar vote in the big cities which he needs to carry"; and it was the same if Gerald Ford made a speech about taxation. Of course the politician is aware of the voters: that is one of the purposes of democracy, that the voters should tell the politicians what they want and need and hope. But it is equally true that most politicians are believing and honest men. Carter believes something, Ford believes something; each true to himself.

In fact, it may well be true that our politicians are today among the few who really believe anything at all. I have not reported politics for 31 years in 26 countries to imagine that politicians are innocent and guileless. But equally I have not reported politics for all those years in all those countries without being certain that politicians as such, however many individuals amongst them are venal or stupid, are the most hopeful messengers of a society's will to improve.

Against that will to improve, which is felt as much by the genuine conservative as by the genuine liberal, there today stand many urgings to inaction. The strongest was once established religion; the strongest today is the economic realm.

This realm does not have to "buy" individual newspapers or journalists, television companies and reporters. It no longer has to work through the blackmail of threatening to withdraw its advertising. In fact, it now generously contributes its advertising: life is brought to us "by a grant from Mobil Oil." Its seduction is more sophisticated. It encourages the elevation of every other realm of life above that of politics, so that we are encouraged to believe that no one is more base than the politician, and that it is only from mundane motives that free men go to the polls.

It is not surprising that the economic realm has given so much energy in the past half-century to destroying the popular faith in the political world, because it is only the political world in our societies which has shown that it has the energy to control the economic realm. The economic realm can afford to let people believe in gods and gurus, in art and play, because these are ultimately not threatening to it; in fact it can manipulate them. Over its review of the Rauschenberg exhibition that opened in Washington in election week, *The Washington Post* put the rather brilliant headline "Goofy and Grand." It is an enticing summary of everything in Rauschenberg that makes his work a pleasure to look at. But the bother is that it *is* goofy, as well as grand; and that is why even the world of art, without the defense of politics, is a world of culture which the economic realm can manipulate. It can render it harmless, as art has indeed been rendered harmless.

The one thing that the economic realm knows about the political world is that it is not goofy. So its only defense against politics is to make it seem less than grand. This is the corruption to which political journalism is at the moment subject. Political journalists have been seduced into believing that politics is probably if not necessarily ignoble.

The moral information which has been lacking in the coverage of this year's election is the conviction that the political world is inherently good. It is as if every journalist is afraid that he might be caught in believing in something or in somebody. Yet on the whole, the political world in the past 200 years has accomplished a great deal of good for a vast number of people. There is more for it to do: the art of the necessary is always in need of redefinition. People whom we did not think of as poor yesterday seem to us to be poor today, because we have redefined our idea of poverty; we have raised the threshold, by the energy of our politics.

What is wrong with Walter Cronkite's laying on of hands, once he is told who has won, is that he is laying his hands on power and not on politics. Jimmy Carter is open to every nit-picking slur until suddenly he has power; and that obeisance to power is just as much a rejection of the political world as the nit-picking at the mere candidate before he has achieved it.

Politics is not primarily about power. It is about the will to power: the will to use the resources of the political world to subdue the other realms when they become overweening. To make my own position clear, there are all kinds of things about Jimmy Carter that make my stomach turn with apprehension. One must remain alert to every cunning and temptation in him, as in all great politicians. But from the beginning he has looked like a great politician, a man who has learned

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from his own background and his own time; and the one thing that the political world needs today is a great politician to restore its claims to supremacy.

"The pollsters will never go out on a limb," said Jimmy Carter when he realized that he had won, using the phrase with which I began. It is an important remark because if he had ever heeded the polls more than his own judgment, he would never have started on his improbable journey. However many skills, however much ruthlessness, contributed to his victory, they were much less important than his own willingness to go out on a limb, with the deep conviction, as trustworthy as it may be in a priest or an artist of their own worlds, that the political world is there to be used to alter our perceptions and our condition.

If political journalists do not also believe as much, they should get jobs as fashion writers, or movie critics; or abandon journalism altogether and be satisfied to be interior decorators. If revolution is not a picnic, the politics of a free country is not a boutique. The political world today needs an imagery of grandeur equal to its own measure: to excite that imagery may well prove to be Jimmy Carter's most lasting contribution to our times. He should be encouraged to attempt it.

Left, Right, Right

Europe's New Conservatism

by Michael Ledeen

At the very moment when Eurocommunism was looking like the wave of the future, Western Europe has shown signs of embarking on a very different political course. A series of election defeats in West Germany, Sweden and Belgium has created an overall impression that the advance of the left has been halted in Europe and that there may be a growing consensus behind centrist parties and politicians. Even in Finland, living under the "officially neutral" shadow of the Soviets, conservatives scored significant gains at the expense of the Communists and Socialists in the late October elections. The question that currently intrigues European analysts is whether this represents a rejection of the tenets of European social democracy or just a passing mood.

The Economist believes the shift is a major one; it sees a worldwide trend toward conservatism reaching from the United States and Canada to Australia and Japan. European Communists and Socialists, on the other hand, think the mood will soon pass. (The Italian Communist weekly *Rinascita* suggested, with a certain immodesty, that Olaf Palme's defeat in Sweden was due to his failure to effect a *compromesso storico* like Italy's.) Whatever the explanation, Social Democrats have been abandoned by a large part of the electorate in the two most stable and prestigious Socialist countries in Western Europe. This is a singular situation, for the loss of voter support comes despite the fact that Socialist governments in Sweden and Germany have had the best managed economies in Europe.

In the last generation, Alfred Sauvy observes in *L'Economie du diable*, the standard of living in the West more than doubled. Although this rise in well-being is unmatched in Western history (and may never be equaled), "discontent, in all classes of society, is the highest ever known." Sauvy's measurement of discontent may not be precise, but the point is well made. For in both Sweden and Germany there is a dramatic reaction against governments which, by virtually all normal standards, have been extraordinary successes. The Swedish Socialists were voted out of power after 44 years; Helmut Schmidt's coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats finds itself with a wafer-thin parliamentary majority in the *Bundestag*, and Schmidt's party actually ran second in the elections of October 3. To round out the picture, consider the Belgian situation. There the elections were expected to carry the Socialists into power throughout the country; instead they simply confirmed the status quo, and left the national government in the hands of a center-right coalition.

Before getting into the whys and wherefores of the phenomenon, certain preliminary warnings must be sounded. The first is that one must beware of identifying the Swedish right with the German right,

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for the "bourgeois parties" of Sweden are not the same as the German CDU-CSU union—the center-right alliance led by Helmut Kohl and Franz Joseph Strauss—which currently menaces the Schmidt-Genscher coalition in Bonn. Prime Minister Fälldin is far more moderate than Kohl or Strauss. Second, the brand of socialism (and particularly the foreign policy) identified with Schmidt is very different from the often demagogic appeals for a more radical worker's role and third-worldism voiced by Olaf Palme and his colleagues in Stockholm. Finally, the Belgian situation is exacerbated by centuries-old linguistic nationalism, and can only be compared to the explosive situation in French Canada. It must be put in a separate category. Despite all these local variations, Europeans perceive a certain coherence to the three elections, and many Socialists say in private that they are deeply concerned about the new trend.

The fall of Olaf Palme was immediately regarded as a major event throughout the continent. A myth of immortality had come to surround the Swedish Socialist party, which had been in power for nearly half a century. Symbols are frequently more important than reality in an age of mass politics, and Sweden represented the Western alternative to Soviet-style socialism. Swedish socialism has been thought of for years as "the middle way." Sweden was often held up as an instance of a country where socialism had worked—guaranteeing well-being and prosperity, leaving 92 percent of industry in private hands, keeping Western traditions strong and vigorous. "Socialism with a human face" had a permanent capital in Stockholm. Suddenly it was gone. No matter that Fälldin and company had no intention of tampering with the welfare state. No matter that the new "bourgeois" government will be indistinguishable from its predecessor in most major programs. Palme's defeat sent a shockwave through Europe and became a major issue in the German campaign.

As might have been expected, Franz Joseph Strauss made the Swedish elections a central theme of his campaign. "The other day the great film director Ingmar Bergman came to see me," Strauss told the large crowds that flocked to hear him in Bavaria, "and he said to me, 'I am 59, which is fairly old, and I do not know how long I shall be able to work. But for the time I have left, I shall stay in Munich. Here the spirit of liberty still exists.'" With an air of triumph, Strauss urged his followers to imitate the Swedes. The Swedish voters had realized, he argued, that they had passed from social democracy to socialism, and from socialism, in an unstoppable slide, they were on their way to "Communist collectivism."

Many have argued that Strauss' harsh attacks in fact proved a liability to the conservative CDU-CSU coalition, which dominated the last regional elections and was given an excellent chance to remove the Social Democrats from power. The polls show that Schmidt recovered strongly in the closing weeks of the campaign, precisely at the time when Strauss levelled his most violent attacks against him. But the most recent analyses of the October 3 vote indicate that the opposite may be true. The conservatives did best where they ran candidates linked to Strauss (who carried Bavaria with a stunning 60 percent of the popular vote, a true landslide), and ran weakest where they ran candidates associated with Strauss' more liberal partner—Helmut Kohl. Indeed, Strauss is so convinced that the coalition must move further to the right that he has recently suggested that Kohl should disassociate himself from his more liberal allies in the CDU. Otherwise, Strauss argues, the alliance will be split (a tactic which, according to some of Strauss' pollsters, would have produced an election victory). Despite the CDU-CSU electoral slogan ("socialism or liberty") their opponent was hardly the incarnation of radical socialism. As a leading Italian journalist noted, "Schmidt held; but he held (by) rejecting the visions of *Ostpolitik*, rejecting social demagogery, anchoring his foreign policy to a special tie with the United States, and above all by keeping the Mark strong relative to other Western currencies." The implication is twofold: the real target of the Straussian assault was Brandt, and if he were still at the head of the SPD-FDP coalition, the right might well have taken power.

That the elections in Sweden and Germany represent something more than a momentary fancy is also suggested by some fascinating polls on the political attitudes of young Swedes and Germans. In 1972, it will be recalled, the vote was granted to 18-year-olds in Germany, and the 18-to-21-year-old vote went heavily in favor of the left (as it did in virtually every other European country when the young voted for the first time); a spectacular 75 percent voted for Brandt. But in the 1976 elections they voted differently: 50 percent for the center-right coalition, 38 percent for the Social Democrats, 12 percent for the Free Democrats. When Herbert Marcuse came to Germany in September and observed the attitudes of university students, he said: "I could cry."

The same shift has taken place in Sweden. In a poll of over 12,000 school children between 12 and 18, the Socialists could muster only 26 percent (as against 43 in the general elections), while the Center party of the new Prime Minister got 38 percent (24 in the elections) and the moderates and liberals totalled 23.5 percent between them. If the statistics represent the political future of Sweden, it means that the "bourgeois coalition" which today governs with a fractional parliamentary majority, would have an overwhelming advantage five years from now, and Swedish socialism—the showcase of European social democracy—would be relegated to the position of a strong opposition party with no serious chance of gaining power.

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How is one to account for this surprising development? Some cynics have suggested that we in the West now have an ongoing generational conflict that functions like a political sine wave. Since each generation opposes the views of the one preceeding, there is a continuous alternation of left and right wing generations. In this somewhat fanciful, but not altogether wrongheaded view, a generation would appear to last something like three to five years. Others point to the economic crisis, and note sagely that inflation and unemployment generally favor the right (conveniently ignoring France and Italy, where the economic crisis is far more intense, and the left continues to gain strength). Still others note sagely that inflation and unemployment favor the *left*, and run smack up against the Belgian results. Clearly the answer lies elsewhere.

In the first place, there is a growing sentiment throughout the West against revolutionary change. As Raymond Aron observed in *Le Figaro* after the German elections, it is significant that even the left wing parties which are on the upswing (France, Italy and Portugal) are firmly and irrevocably opposed to revolution. In Italy, despite Enrico Berlinguer's recent proclamation that his party was, and would always remain true to its Communist principles, nobody believes that the same party that today embraces the Christian Democratic austerity program and criticizes opposition to it from the trade unions, will tomorrow transmogrify into a wild anti-Capitalist beast. In France, François Mitterand is holding seminars for businessmen in an attempt to convince them of the rightness of his moderate Socialist economic policies. Mario Soares in Portugal sounds like a Latin Helmut Schmidt on most matters. For Aron, all of this signifies that Western Europeans have seen the end of the cycle of revolutionary socialism. And whenever a Socialist party shows signs of leaping its natural boundaries and embarking on radical adventures, the electorate responds by installing a more centrist government (or, as in the German case, just barely voting in a Social Democratic Chancellor while reinforcing the centrist and right wing opposition).

In this framework, Schmidt's reelection is viewed as a personal triumph rather than a confirmation of his party, while Palme's defeat is taken to be a rejection of both the man and his movement. If Strauss' violent anti-Socialist rhetoric has little to do with Swedish realities, there is no question but that, after 44 years of social democracy, Swedes had become skeptical of Palme. Their disillusionment is linked to both national and international considerations, many of which have been overlooked.

Most observers of the Swedish scene explained Palme's fall in terms of a general discontent with "big government" and with the issue of nuclear power plants (supported by Palme, rejected by Fälldin). Yet they overlooked the interesting fact that the most heated debate in parliament this year was over neither bureaucracy nor electrical power, but aid to Cuba. In the end, Palme carried the floor, and the full amount he asked for was approved. But the intensity of the debate suggested that many Swedes were beginning to wonder about the "third worldism" of their leader, and perhaps felt that a more clearly Western government was in order. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the makeup of the new government, which puts Liberal leader Per Ahlmark in the joint post of minister of labor and deputy prime minister (an office that didn't exist before). Ahlmark, a former journalist, is a passionate ecologist, a strong advocate of Swedish entry into the Common Market, and a vigorous supporter of Israel. As the French centrist newspaper *L'Aurore* observed, it is to be expected that the new government will practice a more balanced sort of neutrality than the so-called "active neutrality" of Palme which, in the newspaper's words, was often "deplored in the West for its one-way humanitarianism."

The same model can be applied to Germany. In conversations with leading Socialists (SPD party) I got the impression that the SPD feels it has paid the price for the failure of the *Ostpolitik* of Brandt, and that a new nationalist wave is sweeping the country. If the SPD survived the onslaught it is because Germans voted for the party of Schmidt, not that of Brandt. They voted for a Schmidt who, unlike Brandt, publicly spoke of his frustration at having to bail out an incompetent and degenerate Italy whose strong Communist party continues to threaten European and NATO stability. Germans voted for a Schimdt untouched by the scandals that toppled Brandt and which had already produced the CDU-CSU surge in the *Bundesrat*. They voted for a Schmidt who has already accepted part of the opposition program, a Schmidt whose nationalism is beyond suspicion. They did not vote for Brandt's allegiance to European socialism, or his idealistic internationalism.

The revival of an all-too-familiar European nationalism, with or without a parallel intensification of "Western" or "Atlantic" sentiments, can be found in other countries as well. In Denmark, for example, there is the curious growth of the Progress party, and its seemingly science-fiction program of recalling all ambassadors from abroad, firing over 4000 government employees, replacing the national defense program with an answering service that says "we surrender" in Russian, and making every Dane's first $10,000 of income entirely tax-free. There, as in Sweden and Germany, voters are tired of social programs that appear to produce a bloated bureaucracy and reduce the independence and initiative of the middle classes.

No discussion of recent European elections would be complete without some reference to the case of Malta, where the mercurial and charismatic Dom Mintoff was

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reelected prime minister on a program of keeping Malta out of NATO and out of Europe. Mintoff, with his well-known ties to China and Libya (he has accepted money and hundreds of advisers from the Chinese and from Col. Qadaffi), still has a slim mandate to go ahead with his hyper-nationalist program, which includes the creation of "labor squads" for the unemployed, a drive toward the use of the Maltese language, and repression of internationalist elements, particularly in the business community which opposed him. Following the elections, the Nationalist party of Malta found its offices sacked by the frenzied faithful of Mintoff's Labor party; and when the Nationalists accused Mintoff of election fraud, and had their case sustained in court, the judges were simply removed from office. (This despite a clause in the Maltese Constitution providing for the nullification of any elections in which fraud was demonstrated). What's possible for Mrs. Gandhi's gargantuan India is possible also for Mintoff's Lilliputian Malta. Today, on the island of Malta, almost anything can happen.

The most likely prediction is that on March 31, 1979, when the last British soldier leaves the island and Independence Day is proclaimed, there will be a private celebration in Tripoli, where Col. Qadaffi will exult in his continued economic and political influence over this strategically important island base. It's one of the ironies of left wing nationalism that it also falls so easily under the sway of paymasters abroad. But Qadaffi's triumph, and Mintoff's, won't last forever.

The Stalled Momentum Of Eurocommunism

by Tad Szulc

Rome

Communism in Eastern and Western Europe is undergoing profound changes and crises, and this is the time for the United States to adopt a more realistic and a less awed view of the whole European Communist phenomenon. Stated briefly, the conventional wisdom about the Communist monolith in Eastern Europe and the challenge of "Eurocommunism" in Western Europe should be reviewed in the light of a number of major new developments since mid-1976.

Communism in Europe is here to stay, but as a cohesive international movement and as a conquering ideology, it has suffered serious setbacks, probably with more to come. Every Moscow-linked party in Eastern Europe is clearly in trouble, either at home or with the Soviet Union; and the problem-ridden big Western European parties have stopped using the expression "international Communist movement."

After an extended visit to Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and a half-dozen Western European countries, and in-depth discussions with top Communist leaders on politburo and central committee levels (a privilege rarely accorded American newsmen in Eastern Europe), my own conclusion is that 1976 has been a significant turning point for European communism—and not a positive one. A second and related conclusion is that in Western Europe the principal concern of the United States in the new year should be not so much "Eurocommunism" as "Euroeconomics," the latter being the alarming deterioration in the economic situation in practically every country except West Germany and, possibly, the Benelux countries. There is a real danger that in 1977, the Common Market itself could undergo unprecedented convulsions, shaking its very foundations. This view was conveyed to me in the strongest terms at the headquarters of the European Economic Commission in Brussels late in October.

It has long been conventional wisdom that communism profits from economic and social upheavals in Capitalist countries. I do not believe that this holds true any longer—and this is perhaps one of the most important new facts in today's Western Europe. In general terms—as the Communist parties in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal are now finding out—these countries are less and less inclined to turn to communism for solutions to national problems. There is a subtle but very real shift in public opinion in Western Europe, and it has become particularly accentuated this fall. "Communism is no longer the answer, as a great many disappointed people are discovering," an Italian politician who had been earlier flirting with Communists told me.

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This budding disenchantment with communism has coincided with a visible conservative trend in elections in West Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Finland this autumn. Taken together, all these indicators seem to suggest that a fresh look should be taken at "Eurocommunism."

The central event of the year for European communism—possibly the central event since the end of the Second World War—was the conference of 29 European Communist parties held in East Berlin on June 29 and 30. It produced a lengthy document ("For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe"), proclaiming, in effect, the independence from Moscow of individual Communist parties, doing away with the Soviet concept of "international proletarianism" (this was the doctrine the Kremlin invoked in 1968 to justify Czechoslovakia's invasion by Warsaw Pact armies), pointedly omitting all ritual references to Marxism-Leninism and dropping the traditional notion that communism is the natural leader of all "progressive forces." But the Berlin conference has to be seen in a broader context of European politics.

Reluctantly signed by Soviet Communist Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev and the leaders of Moscow-line parties attending the conference, the Berlin document was what Italian and Yugoslav Communist leaders, the main architects of this new ideological tack, described to me as the "point of no return" in Communist relationships. In the view of the Western parties, Brezhnev and his followers had no choice but to sign the document; the alternative was no document and no Berlin conference at all. That would have been an even greater embarrassment to the Soviets than the concessions that they made on paper. I found that senior Communist leaders in Warsaw and Budapest privately agreed with this view.

I was told in Belgrade that the Yugoslav, Italian, Romanian and possibly French parties were prepared to boycott the conference altogether until the last moment when Moscow finally agreed to accept the Italian-Yugoslav draft of the document with all the concessions it implied from the Soviet side.

There was quite a bit of hidden drama in these secret negotiations, as I learned in my attempts to reconstruct the behind-the-scenes story. The preparatory work for the conference, which Moscow earnestly hoped would demonstrate the unity of the European Communist movement, began in October, 1974. By mid-fall 1975, general agreement seemed to have been reached. But in October Moscow had a change of heart: it trotted out again the doctrine of "international proletarianism" (this was at the height of the effort by Portuguese Communists to capture power in Lisbon). For all practical purposes, preparatory work on the conference came to a standstill.

Only after Brezhnev was reconfirmed in his leadership position at the Soviet Communist Party Congress in February 1976, did the Russians signal their interest in resuming negotiations on a basis acceptable to the "independentists." But, even so, progress was excruciatingly slow. The date for the conference was set for June 29, but the Russians were still fighting a rearguard battle. By late April, the Polish and French parties suggested privately that the conference be postponed — an open clash in Berlin was feared at that point — but this was rejected. Brezhnev evidently felt that a postponement would expose the profound schism within the Communist movement, and he preferred to take his chances with a document he kept hoping could be improved to his satisfaction.

It was touch-and-go until the last days before the formal opening of the conference. Early in June, Moscow sent word that it was willing to discuss the Italian-Yugoslav draft *during* the conference; the reply from the Italians, Yugoslavs, Spaniards, Romanians and the French was that they would stay home unless Brezhnev accepted their version as the final document. Now the Soviets appeared to be trapped—and they capitulated. In the latter part of June, Konstantin Katuschev, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in charge of relations with "fraternal parties" (and the chief Soviet negotiator in the preparatory phase) flew quietly to Bucharest and Belgrade to bring word that Brezhnev would sign the document formulated by the "independentists." It was only three days before the Berlin conference was to open that Tito and his allies made it known that they would attend.

Four months after the signing of the document, I asked Communist leaders in Eastern and Western European capitals what it has really meant in a practical way to each party and to the Communist movement as a whole. The replies serve to underline the deep differences that continue to exist among European Communists despite — or because of — the Berlin conference. If there is a single conclusion about Berlin, it is that it represented a standoff; the ideological struggles will certainly go on.

In Poland and Hungary, whose Communist parties are closely aligned with Moscow, I was told that "each party is free to interpret the document as it sees fit." The pro-Moscow parties, for example, plan to continue to adhere to the Soviet concepts of "international proletarianism" with all that this implies in foreign policy. The rationale is that although this obedience is no longer required, there is nothing to prevent the parties following the Moscow banner from maintaining their dogmatic positions. Thus, Poland and Hungary — the Berlin document notwithstanding — will continue to follow Moscow and believe in the vanguard role of the Communist parties in global politics.

But even within these Eastern European parties there are nuances in interpreting the Berlin document. The Polish party, despite its allegiance to Moscow, feels

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closer to the Western Communists, especially the Italians, than do the others in Eastern Europe. After the Poles, the Romanians are the most Western-inclined in the group. (Yugoslavia is a separate case.) Polish Communists also feel that they have much to gain from "exchanges of experiences" with the Western parties, but they may be discouraged from this tendency if Moscow, reacting to the Berlin conference, increases ideological pressures on its Eastern European allies; there are already indications that the Russians are pushing for an ideological tightening in the region.

Because of its continuing internal crisis stemming from last June's food riots, the Polish party is especially vulnerable to such pressures. Late in October, the Hungarian party announced a new campaign of ideological purification. Romania, active in the autonomy movement in Berlin, is in the midst of a Marxist-Leninist "cultural revolution." There is new rigidity in East Germany, and a new frontier barrier separating it physically from the West.

There may even be a relationship, according to some experts, between the disarray in European communism and the mounting Soviet military build-up in Central Europe.

The Yugoslav, Romanian, Italian and Spanish parties have no doubt that the Soviet party and its allies will remain hard ideologically, and this leads them to the conclusion — expressed to me by their leaders — that Berlin marked the beginning, rather than the end, of the Communist ideological struggle. "You know the value of documents," a Politburo member in Belgrade told me.

This was another way of saying that Moscow will certainly try to sabotage by all possible means the autonomy the Western parties think they have won. The Yugoslav official noted, as did Communist leaders in Italy, that the Soviet press had thus far failed to publish the full text of the Berlin document and that speeches delivered at the conference by Tito, Berlinguer and some of the other "rebels" were severely censored.

For the Yugoslavs, facing the uncertainties of who will succeed Tito, Soviet signals are vital at this stage; but the Yugoslavs make no bones about their determination to follow their policies of independent communism. They think that Brezhnev signed the Berlin document for purely tactical reasons: a leading Yugoslav party leader observed that "the Soviet party has never accepted anything voluntarily — they were made to accept this document and now they'll try to get around it as much as they can." Still, he said, the Berlin declaration "represents a change in trends and in the relations of forces between the Russians and the other parties, and they cannot ignore it altogether . . . It is an affirmation of relations between the parties without any conditions; it implies the responsibility of the Communist party in each country to its own people and not to international forces; there can be no double responsibility."

In Rome, a leading Politburo member told me that "Berlin was not a compromise — it was all or nothing — and the Russians simply have to live with it." Both Yugoslav and Italian leaders said separately that in order to be able to sign the document, Brezhnev had to overcome strong internal opposition in the Soviet party. According to an Italian party leader, who was deeply involved in the negotiations, "Brezhnev decided to de-ideologize the situation for pragmatic reasons; he could not afford a confrontation." His Yugoslav counterpart agreed with this view, which seems to shed some new light on inner Soviet Politburo politics.

One of the bitterest battles before Berlin — the final crisis before the signing of the document — was over Soviet insistence that a denunciation of "imperialism" and praise of "socialist democracy" be included in the declaration. The Western parties and the Yugoslavs opposed it successfully on the grounds that "propaganda" concerning the situation in Europe did not properly belong in the document. Besides, as an Italian leader remarked, "how could we accept a general statement about socialist democracy if it was being signed by a man like Czechoslovakia's Gustav Husak?"

On the assumption that the ideological tug-of-war will continue between the pro-Moscow parties on one side and Western and Yugoslav parties on the other, the next point is how Berlin and its aftermath are affecting Communist relationships in Europe as a practical matter.

The first clear fact is that the Western parties expect to have no more international Communist conferences. Their view is that the Berlin document, affirming the autonomy of each party, rules out the need for any such future meetings inasmuch as Moscow is no longer recognized as the Communist power center. Communist leaders in Eastern Europe agree that a world Communist conference, something that Moscow would still like to see, is utterly out of the question. Even an improvement in Soviet-Chinese relations would not make it possible any more, they say.

The in-fighting between pro-Moscow parties and the Western parties is picking up momentum four months after Berlin. The Italian party, objecting to the internal repression of the Husak regime in Prague, has broken relations with the Czechoslovak party, a gesture that the less rigid Eastern European parties (such as the Polish and the Hungarian) are loath to criticize publicly.

The French party (increasingly keen on emphasizing its national independence) is at loggerheads with the Soviet government, not just the Soviet party, over its support for imprisoned Soviet political dissidents. In an unprecedented move late in October, the Soviet news agency TASS harshly criticized French Communist Party leaders for attending a meeting in Paris to protest the imprisonment of political dissidents in dictatorial countries, including the Soviet Union. TASS called the

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protest meeting a "dirty undertaking," and the French party responded with an announcement on October 23 that it would print six million copies of a speech by Pierre Juquin, a Central Committee member, denouncing the jailings.

Georges Marchais, the party's secretary-general, explained that French Communists were acting in line with decisions taken at their 22nd Congress early this year (when the party dropped "proletarian internationalism" without waiting for the Berlin meeting) and that "nothing will make us budge an inch from this line."

This French attitude as well as the policies of the Italian and Spanish parties reflect a desire to be accepted as "national" rather than "foreign" parties in the context of their domestic politics. This is what these parties mean by "Eurocommunism," as it relates to their hopes to share some day in the political power in their countries.

Thus the French party is seeking new respectability in preparation for the 1978 parliamentary elections. The Communists and the Socialists in France are allied against President Giscard d'Estaing as the "Union de la Gauche," but this is an uneasy marriage in which the Socialists enjoy greater strength than the Communists. Stressing nationalism, French Communists are hoping to make inroads in the Socialist ranks and to emerge as equal partners in 1978.

The Italian party, a "silent partner" of the ruling Christian Democrats since the June parliamentary elections, needs maximal acceptance to extend its influence and, in time, formally enter the Rome government. But the Italian Communist leaders are already facing formidable problems with their cadres because of their tacit support of the Christian Democratic government's tough economic austerity measures. As the emergency meeting of the Party's Central Committee late in October demonstrated, the party is now split right down the middle between pragmatists led by Secretary-General Berlinguer and the old-liners, headed by Luigi Longo, the party's president. The latter want to disassociate Communists from the government's austerity program.

Berlinguer carried the day, but the party's ardor for cabinet seats has perceptibly diminished, and the talk at the Rome Central Committee building is that the "transition period" before Communists are ready to enter the government may last as long as five years. In fact, some analysts here are beginning to suggest, ever so carefully, that Italian communism may have peaked, and that it no longer represents the danger that was perceived in the West several months ago.

The Spanish Party, hoping for legalization after the government of King Juan Carlos I and Spain's parliament formally declares political parties lawful in the country following 40 years of Franco dictatorship, is keeping an extremely low profile, disassociating itself totally from Moscow. Although Communists are strong in the Spanish labor movement, they are unlikely, as things now stand, to command even 10 percent of the vote even if they could participate in elections slated for next spring.

Looking at the Berlin document from the domestic viewpoint of these parties, it is obvious that it was intended to serve their interests rather than Moscow's. This is why they have been proclaiming their national independence, rejecting the existence of a "Communist international movement," abandoning old "popular front" tactics, and insisting that Communists must work as *equals* with all "workers' parties," including Socialists, Social Democrats and Christian Democrats (the language of the Berlin document), for social progress.

It is possible to argue that the Berlin conference and "Eurocommunism" are a gigantic fraud being perpetrated by Western European Communists on Moscow's orders to achieve domination in a changed political context. There are, to be sure, many contradictions in the positions of these "independent" parties — such as the fact that many of them, including the Italian party, generally support Soviet foreign policy — and there may be valid reasons for continued Western skepticism over this new face of European communism.

But common sense tends to militate against such extreme interpretations. Berlin and everything else that has been happening with European communism are a product of Communist evolution in Western Europe over the last decade or so, an evolution punctuated by dramatic events such as the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia which young Communists find unacceptable.

Communists in Europe will continue their push for power, but in changed conditions, relying increasingly on identification with domestic interests, and competing at the polls with established democratic parties. They will undoubtedly seek alliances, as in Italy and in France, but no longer as Moscow's handmaidens. The spectre of "Eurocommunism," therefore, appears somewhat less menacing, particularly when one considers the emerging "identity crisis" of European communism itself.

Under these circumstances, the United States would do well to shed its fear of European communism and acquire more faith in Western European democracy, no longer seeing communism as virtually invincible. It may spare the United States the embarrassment produced by the remark Secretary of State Kissinger made privately to Spain's King Juan Carlos, when he visited Washington last June, that communism was engulfing Europe and that we would do well to seek a direct alliance with West Germany and Spain as bulwarks of anti-communism. The young king, desperately trying to build a form of democracy in his own country, was dismayed. And rightly so.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Network

(M-G-M)

Heaven has blessed Paddy Chayefsky. He was born with just enough of everything. He writes at the top of his bent, he doesn't (in his own mind) trim or patronize, and the level of his structural skill, rhetorical gift, social anger, character portrayal, and satirical slash puts him right in the forefront of the middle. He's the kind of writer that the college-educated post-Second-War audience likes to respond to: not an obvious escape-monger or fabricator but a venturer who takes his audience on an interesting tour of anguish or anger and then delivers everyone safely right back to his front door. *Marty*, seeming to say bravely that Homely Is Beautiful, was really an exercise in self-praise. *The Tenth Man*, seeming to inquire about the truth of spirituality in the neon age, was theologically the Jewish antecedent of the Jesus freaks. *The Hospital*, seeming ruthlessly to probe medical malpractice, ended up a two-handkerchief weeper. How can we ever thank him enough?

Well, we're trying.

And he deserves it. *Network* is his best original screenplay so far, with lots of fast and fizzy dialogue and some nicely rounded periods. His subject is TV—front-office power plays, knifework on the 30th floor. He began in TV over 25 years ago and we know that he knows what he's talking about: that we're getting the lingo straight; that the characters may be composites but are not invented. Chayefsky has his talents, he does his best, and he delivers.

But the package he delivers is, as usual, too neatly wrapped. All the sizzling verisimilitude once more encloses trite domestic drama and herniated mysticism. In *The Hospital* there was a foredoomed May-December romance; encore in *Network*. In *The Hospital* there was American Indian mysticism; here it's the prophetic "possession" of a newscaster. And there is an ending once again that gets him off the hook—though (for him) with a new kind of sentimentality. Taken all in all, the script of *Network* gleams more wickedly than anything he has written, but it ends only in a new safety zone.

The ninepins of the plot keep whirling. Faye Dunaway is a programming chief on the make, and making it. William Holden is a news department head on the skids with whom she has an affair. Robert Duvall is the business whiz who represents the Big Money, who backs Dunaway and sacks Holden. Peter Finch is a seven p.m. national newscaster—gray-haired, of course, like Cronkite and Reasoner and Smith and as even Barbara Walters may be in some egalitarian future. Finch's ratings slip, and since there's no other work he can do, he promises on the air that he will commit suicide on the air. (Like much else in the script, this derives from an actual event.) First, Finch is yanked, but the tremendous public reaction persuades the smartniks to put him back on. The network begins to play bluntly to the fact that, fundamentally, newscasting is not journalism but show biz. Finch's ratings soar; he begins to pontificate and sells the public a slogan. Then he begins to have fainting fits after his visionary speeches, is taken off, and is again put back on, precisely to launch the jeremiads and then faint, every night at seven. (The whole Finch narrative is incredible, but the wrapping of realism is clever enough to make us let it slide for the sake of the fun.)

The slogan that Finch proposes, after he says on the air that he is sickened by the bullshit of our times and of TV, is: "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it any more." He tells viewers to go to the window, open it, and shout the slogan; and the fact that lots of them do exactly that is what keeps him on the air and makes him, for a time anyway, a hit again. Finch's social criticism and slogan absolutely typify Chayefsky. He sees, as we all do, that much of what happens around us and on TV *is* bullshit; he says so; and what is his prescription? Go to the window and let off steam in a meaningless phrase. In fact, when Finch continues in his Phase II, the studio audience is even guided by the announcer—art thou listening, Herbert Marcuse?—to shout the rebellious slogan in unison as a warmup for the show.

Some of the script's satire seems more conscious. Dunaway divines that America wants "angry" shows so she engages an Angela Davis type to MC a show about radical activities. The Davis type gets in touch with some Symbionese Liberation Army types (with a Patty Hearst figure in the background). In the hideout of the SLA types, the radicals of the left and of the left-left chew over the details of their TV contract with their lawyers and agents. And there's a rendezvous sequence between Dunaway and Holden in which she talks non-stop TV trade talk all through the candlelight dinner and the undressing in the bedroom, even when she's (of course!) on top of him, until she is silenced by her climax.

Chayefsky knows that some of his scenes are trite, like the breakup between Holden and Dunaway, and tries to cover them—he may think he's deepening them—by having a character say, "This is like the old scene in which. . . ." Try as he does to soft-shoe past the corn patches, he still gets stuck once in a while with lines like "I can't get you out of my mind."

But even his weak moments, and certainly his stronger ones, are well handled by the director. Sidney Lumet, an old TV hand dating back about as far as Chayefsky, began his service to this script with some sharp casting. Finch has a scale large enough for the prophetic newscaster. Holden energizes out of the lags into which he has sometimes lapsed in the past. Dunaway, cold and cutting and sexy, gives her best performance since *Bonnie and Clyde*. Duvall, though he sounds a bit truckdriverish at times, shoots off more sparks than usual. And Beatrice

Films Worth Seeing

The Clockmaker. Lovely French film, chiefly about two middle-aged men, the father of a murderer and the detective in charge of the case. Politically glib but rich.

The Marquise of O. . . Eric Rohmer's exquisite film "placement" of Kleist's novella, in Kleist's language. A gem.

The Memory of Justice. Marcel Ophuls' huge, hugely intelligent essay on justice, beginning with Nuremberg and moving outward. Most of it beautifully made, all of it most welcome.

The Seven-per-cent Solution. Sherlock Holmes meets Sigmund Freud—and high time, too, for both of them. A wonderfully acted romp.

SK

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Straight, as the forsaken Holden wife, handles her big scene with what I can only call class. All of them shine with the feeling that they know they are working for a director who understands actors, that they have relied on him, and that he has come through for them. As they have for him. They are all exceptionally good.

Lumet has "cast" the cinematographer right, too. See how Owen Roizman has lighted Holden's face in both the romantic and anti-romantic scenes: all the creases and brown spots of middle age are dramatized without any facile Truthtelling. See how Roizman has lighted the big business meetings, to keep them believably sinister. Through the whole film his lighting acts as certificate and control. And the editor, Alan Heim—aided by Lumet and the producer Howard Gottfried, I assume—has worked with sensitivity. In the two-scenes, where the camera goes from one face to the other, Heim cuts at just the right moment: not away from the speaker just at the end of a line, of course, and not arbitrarily just before the end of a line but exactly at the moment when we know we want to see the other person's face, or when we *didn't* know it and are grateful.

All through his spotty career Lumet has seemed most comfortable shooting in and around New York City, from *Stage Struck* (1958) to *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975). Here he is so easy that he even indulges in some private jokes. The best kind: if you get them, fine; if you don't, you're not left out in the cold. A WASP executive of the network dies, and we see Dunaway come out of his funeral. Lumet shoots it outside a well-known synagogue on West 83rd Street. Finch visits the headquarters of a huge multinational conglomerate, and we see him going up the marble stairs—of the New York Public Library.

And that brings us to the melodramatic ending, which is obliquely forced by that conglomerate. The script builds to a revelation that the network is in the hands of an international conspiracy whose only faith is in dollars. The profit motive, at a pitch that is almost metaphysical, is not exactly unknown in modern life, but, as it's handled here, it's converted into just one more version of the pop writer's Devil Theory. The ending delivers a wallop at business brutality at the same time that it saran-wraps our responsibilities. It makes us feel how terrible They are. With this Chayefsky script, instead of weeping and going on as before, we can cluck a few times and go on as before. It's his best.

Walker Evans on Himself

Two days before his death Walker Evans spoke to a class at Harvard about the course of his life and work. Here follow his remarks, edited for The New Republic *by Lincoln Caplan.*

You are at a point where I embarked about 40 years ago more or less on my own. I am self-taught, and I still think that is a good way to be. You learn as you go and do. It is a little slow, but I think that's the way to work. . . .

I have had a good number of years of more or less compulsive photography; I am devoted to it, and I still get a great deal of excitement out of looking at things and getting them the way I want. However, you won't find me overly intellectual about what we are all interested in doing.

I work rather blindly, and I don't think an awful lot about what I am doing. I have a theory that seems to work with me that some of the best things you ever do sort of come through you. You don't know where you get the impetus and the response to what is before your eyes, but you are using your eyes all the time and teaching yourself unconsciously really from morning to night.

There are several tenets that go with this craft of ours. One of them is that the real gift and value in a picture is really not a thought; it is a sensation that is based on feeling. Most people in our tradition are basically rather scared of feeling. You have to unpeel that before you can really get hot and get going and

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not be afraid of feeling.

We are overly literary, really, although I am very much drawn to literature; but I cannot recommend that as an approach, and I keep trying to tear it down because words are abstract things, and feeling in a sense has been abstracted from them. However, feeling remains in the action of producing pictures. Although photography is more descriptive than music, it still is not a story. Although I have a feeling that much of my work is literary—or is done by a literate man because I read a great deal—it is still a way from abstract thought into . . . feelings abstracted from reality.

These words are all relative. No one knows what reality is ultimately. We are rather drawn toward it. That leads me to observe another thing that came into my mind over the years. That is that the young are drawn into photography because in their minds it is associated with the approach, at least, to reality—bearing in mind, as I said, that you don't reach any of these abstract words like "love" and "honor" and "patriotism" even, and "pride." Those are all approaches to an absolute that is never reached. That goes for the word "art" too. Nobody knows what art is, and it can't be taught. I'm repeating, a little bit here, but it's the mind and the talent of the eye of the individual who is operating this machine that produces what comes out of it. He selects, whether consciously or not, what he is doing; and that really leads to the question of style.

One really doesn't associate a machine—a little box with a glass in it—with the personal imprint of the operator, but it is there, and it's a kind of magic, inexplicable quality. After years you begin to tell right away who has some style and who hasn't and who is behind what piece of work you might be looking at. You all know a Weston when you see one; you all know an Adams; and you all know a Cartier. That is their style; they have been strong enough and persevering enough to imprint it on that paper.

I started with a tiny, little six dollar vest-pocket camera that doesn't exist any more—a fixed-focus arrangement. I used that at first, way back in 1928. Like almost every boy, I was given a box camera, and I got interested enough to develop films under red light in the bathroom. I still have some of those things around. They have a little style to begin with; they are straight at least! But unartistic.

That's where I was alone. Most photographers were very uneasy in my youth, and they were all uncomfortable about whether what they were doing was art or not. I was never bothered about that.

Looking at what I was doing, most people didn't think it was anything at all. It was just a wagon in the street or anybody, but that turned out to be what I presume to say was its virtue.

I just found that this was my métier and walked blindly into it. That was a good thing because I hadn't had much experience or sophistication or study in the field. Again, I just brought my feelings to it. That left me alone, which is a good place to be; it's a little painful at times. I didn't associate with photographers; my friends were writers and painters mostly, and a few musicians. However, I was lucky enough to discover without working for it what I was, namely an artist; and I didn't have to be belligerent about it or fight through all the prejudices about artists and their place in society or civilization. I just fell into that slot—rather creamily, I might say.

Creamily. The word just popped into my head! It doesn't mean it was easy; it means that I belonged. You know that you're home when you're in the slot that's made for you. A lot of people suffer years trying to find that; it just came to me.

I think too much, though, and reading leads to introspective inaction. It's a Hamlet quality. I haven't got a rational structure and the expressible, critical opinion of what the object in front of me means on second thought. I do these things pretty much by instinct, and I have learned to trust that instinct. It took me a long time to feel sure of what I was doing. Now I know that when something appeals to me, I don't have to think about it; I just go right to it and do it.

If you are at all sensitive, which artists are supposed to be and usually are, it could make conditions psychologically impossible if you're aware of people too much, so I just go about my business unless I find I really am hurting somebody. I *am* intruding mentally, but I know it's not for a harmful purpose, and it doesn't do anybody any harm. If I find myself opposed very strictly, I stop. There is no use getting into an argument about what you are doing. I walk away and think about something else and do something else.

(When I started out I was living) . . . very shabbily and mostly in Brooklyn or Greenwich Village. It was a pretty good time to be there; there were some remarkably serious people, and it wasn't frivolous. We didn't have any narcotics, and we couldn't afford to drink, so we were sober most of the time. That's why I'm alive today. A lot of people came along later who overindulged in those two things and damaged their lives and health and brains. You know, don't you, that a brain cell disturbed or killed or ruined specifically by alcohol does not—unlike other parts of the body—replace itself; so many people who started drinking rather early in life are brain-damaged or dead.

I wasn't interested in the commercial or advertising end of photography or the fashions. Since those were the high financial rewards, they were crowded with competitors. I was quite alone. I didn't feel that I was competing with anybody. I would be now because this crowd is rather militantly noncommercial—quite rightly. It's sort of hard on them, but they are. I didn't have any support; among a few artists and friends I did, and that was enough to keep me going. Since there wasn't any money—that's a ridiculous phrase, there's *got* to be something to eat—but there wasn't any check to put your mind on. Even eating wasn't very easy or very well done.

I had a small circle of admirers, but I wouldn't call it a public. I waited a long time before I got anything like that. I don't know precisely when.

(Recognition) makes anybody happy a little bit. You have to take it with some misgivings, however, because it is shot through with falseness and snobbery and wrong values that you know better about than to get aboard.

I think any man who thinks at all clearly is very wary of it. I've seen too many awfully good people ruined by it. However, I didn't have any financial support for a long time, so I was rather severely disciplined. I had a certain renown before I was able to earn money. I keep saying it, that there wasn't any money around, but you had to do *some*thing about putting food in your mouth. Of course, most of us were outside the pale and would do almost anything to get a can of beans and didn't care whether it came out of the gutter or where it came from.

I have been making them (photographs) all the time. Well, it's generally sort of straight photography. I get interested in objects a good deal more and more now. It's sort of like collecting, and I get started and am

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attracted to that naturally. I'm interested in signs a great deal right now, so I find that I do signs whenever I can find them. I usually swipe them too; I've got a wonderful collection!

I *do* have a critical mind, and it creeps in, but I am not a social protest artist, although I have been taken as one very widely. If you photograph what's before your eyes and you're in an impoverished environment, you're not—and shouldn't be, I think—trying to change the world or commenting on this and saying, "Open up your heart, and bleed for these people." I would never dream of saying anything like that; it's too presumptuous and naïve to think you can change society by a photograph or anything else. It's a debatable question, of course, and many people say that some books have influenced government decisions. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* comes to mind as a book that is supposed to have changed a certain atmosphere; I don't know—I never read it. Anyway, I equate that with propaganda; I think that is a lower rank of purpose. I believe in staying out, the way Flaubert does in his writing. Of course, you can't be entirely subjective, but I don't think you ought to intrude. It's rude in a way to say, "This is the way I see things." It infers (*sic*) that you ought to see it that way too.

I am a little more sure at some risk of self-satisfaction of what objects in civilization draw me. I have tested it often enough. I can trust myself to go down paths now that perhaps I wouldn't have had the nerve to penetrate before. That doesn't mean that I think that everything I do makes sense, but I am a little less hesitant about going into some things that I haven't been into before.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men wasn't published at first because it didn't suit the editors, fortunately. They were at a time, you must remember, when it was rather silly—when there was no money around or business around—to publish a magazine luxuriously called *Fortune*; and they were confused and uneasy, and they didn't think this fitted—and indeed it did not! It didn't even fit the first publishers who asked for it, to see it.

It was finally published in book form by Houghton Mifflin, and it was completely silently received. I think that nobody bought it. (Its eventual success) was a rather spectacular instance of resuscitation of cast-off material, and of course the world is full of unsung riches around. If you put your mind on it, you could go out today and find very fine work that no public has ever wanted to see or been brought to.

Well, I was overawed by (*Praise*). I immediately felt that I was reading great prose. I was rather too much overawed by it because I could have been of some critical assistance. In fact, Agee asked me to do some editing, but I wouldn't do it. I still think that is a great book. It has many flaws, of course; but it is a very big and large and daring undertaking and a terrific moral effort, as one reviewer said.

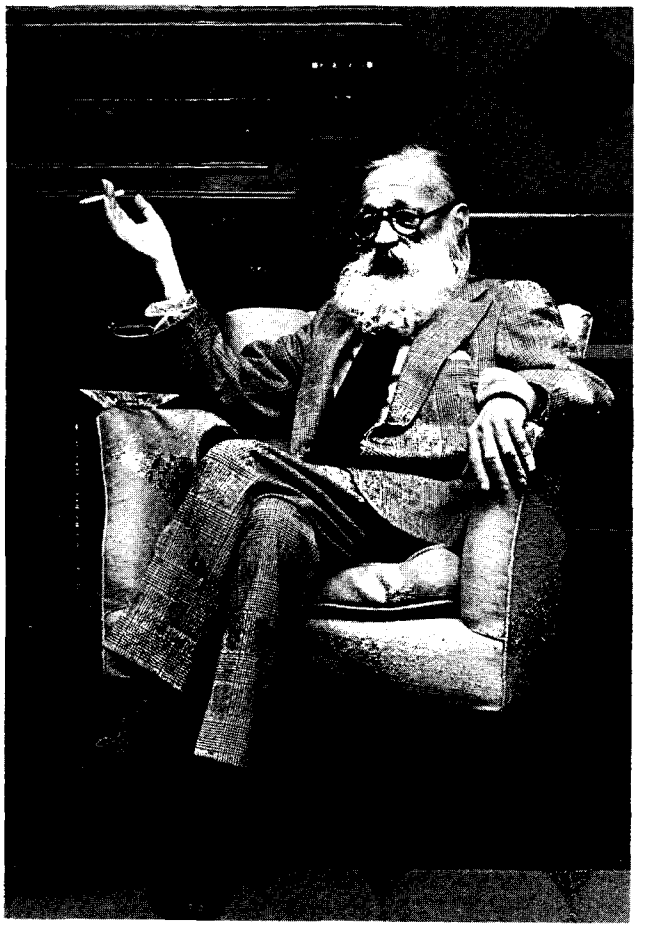
I'd known (Agee) very well. I knew him a long time before we went down there. I was in very close sympathy with that mind; I am very impressed with it. I disapprove of a whole lot too. I had a much more objective approach to artistic raw material. He was very subjective. He used to shock me. I have inhibitions about exposing the personal ego and feelings, and he seems to think that is *the* material and that that is one of the functions of an artist—exposing obscure and hidden parts of the mind and so on.

I think it was Oscar Wilde who said that no poet or even critic who is really an artist is a very good judge of other work. There are notable examples, such as Proust being turned down by André Gide, and Joyce couldn't make any sense out of D. H. Lawrence or vice versa and neither had a word to say to each other. I am a little bit more knowing about photographers, and I have a few friends, but not many. I am very interested in young talent, but that is really the only reason I ever expose myself to them. I like to see their minds and their work, but I don't talk very well (about photography). Also it descends into a form of invidiousness if you begin to talk about artists or producers who are in a sense competitors too. You don't want to be caught running them down because that is unethical really, I believe.

I am very fond of several I would be glad to name: Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander; Arbus was a great friend of mine and great favorite. There are a few others, and then there is a whole crowd of unknown, almost nameless, very gifted students in the universities now. There is a wave of interest in this; I think this is partly for the reason I worked out in my own mind that it looks like an honest medium. Now that is a very untrustworthy idea; you have to be careful how you kick that around because it infers that many young are in there because they don't know any better or have been taken by a fad or fashion. That isn't quite true, and it isn't fair to the young to say that.

Every artist who feels he has a style is a little wary automatically of strong work in view. I suppose we are all a little insecure. I don't like to look at too much of Atget's work because I am too close to that in style myself. I didn't discover him until I had been going for quite a while; and when I did, I was quite electrified and alarmed. . . . It's a little residue of insecurity and fear of such magnificent strength and style there. If it happens to border on yours, it makes you wonder how original you are. Of course the world is full of instances of people intellectually and artistically discovering a style by themselves and being unaware of someone doing the same thing. I've had that happen to me several times.

Walker Evans *Photo by Ed Forman*



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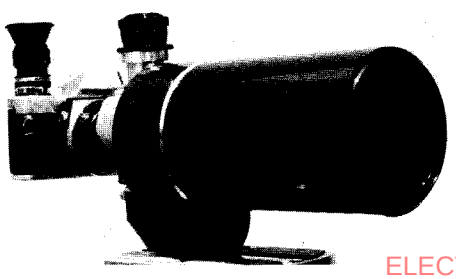

I have a certain street snapshot affinity to Cartier-Bresson, and I was working that way before I knew anything about him, so that squares me with myself anyway and makes me fear it a little less. Some of that feeling in looking at Atget is despair too that we haven't got the wealth of material that he had except for older towns. You can see what has happened to London and Paris in the last generation; those things that he was doing are hard to find now, and they were just the whole ambience at that time.

When I was young—it was just before the Great Depression—this was a very unpleasant society in the sense that if you weren't interested in commerce and business and commercialism in general, there was no place for you. You had to make one. It was very hard to stay outside of the great sweep of material prosperity, which of course fell on its nose in the '30s. Then there was no use looking for something to do anyway; you *had* to make it yourself. That was a good thing for many artists, I think, because they didn't have any sense of guilt about not being in business or Wall Street or some place like that. They couldn't get in if they wanted to. There was no place for them. You may come to get to know that firsthand yourself! It looks as though there is that sort of thing around the corner. It may produce another good bunch of artists, which is all I'm interested in. Really, I feel rather stony hearted about it, but I have suffered so much from the psychology of it that I don't care very much whether this country prospers or not. I don't want to lead the world or be part of that machinery.

We have a terrible pressure on us all in this country to prosper personally, and you probably feel it already. I think underneath that is really what my parents wanted was for me to do that because they thought they were being nice to me and saving me the agony of poverty; but they didn't succeed! I succeeded.

Every man's feeling about his civilization is formed by himself out of the surroundings themselves, and they often are not very original for that reason. I got prejudiced in my feelings by the bitterness of the failures of the society which were so evident before any reform took place. You see, anyone my age has lived through a subterranean or almost automatic social revolution of great change. It was a hateful society, and that embittered all people of my age. It was very fascist unconsciously, and all authority was almost insulting to a sensitive citizen. You either got into that parade, or you got a bum treatment. That changed a great deal, of course; its recognized historical landmark seems to be the Wall Street crash, but that's just a convenient peg to hang it on. That was certainly coming, and that awful society damn well deserved it. I used to jump for joy when I read of some of those stock brokers jumping out of windows! They were really dancing in the streets in the Village the day Michigan went off money and the banks all closed there.

I haven't got a hell of a lot of respect and certainly not much love for the structure of American civilization. I think the government is kind of a joke really. However, when you think about it a little deeper than that, you realize that those flaws and imperfections go with the *idea* of democracy, which upon examination is a pretty wonderful idea.

Like all the young, I went through a time when I was too much of a perfectionist and too much of an idealist. You have to discover, as you probably already have, that those are erroneous forms of thought; they don't work very well or stand any tests or function. Thinking along those lines leads you to see with your critical mind what is behind some of the faults and errors. . . . The idea of democracy is laughed at in very sharply critical circles; but it's a pretty lofty conception, and it's remarkable that it has any functions and forms that are working at all.

I am fascinated by man's work and the civilization he's built. In fact, I think that's *the* interesting thing in the world, what man does. Nature rather bores me as an art form. It doesn't bore me to walk through nature and let it play its forces and influences on me. It's restorative, but I don't use it creatively. In fact, nature photographs downright bore me for some reason or other. I think, "Oh, yes. Look at that sand dune. What of it?" But if you're in love with civilization, as I am, you stick to that.

I think a great deal about childhood as my life goes on. I get obsessed by it. That's why you see bookshelves so full of so many memoirs. There is a time when you do turn backward—with some reluctance, I must say, because it doesn't seem to me to be the right state of mind. However, that material crowds up, and it is so rich and so fascinating that you speculate a good deal on it.

You know, I've gone back far enough to find out that (photographing the scenes of my childhood) can't be done, and it's always a letdown and an

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ungratifying experience. Things don't look right. You go up to something that you knew in your childhood, and you are full of feeling about it, and that feeling doesn't come through—the object doesn't reflect that feeling. You put something in it that's no longer there, something of yourself. I avoid that strictly now, although I am very interested in the immediate past *im*personally. I've got quite a few rare records of streets—particularly slum streets in New York, and Charleston, South Carolina and Louisiana—that have all been cleaned out and torn down, so that the whole atmosphere has been changed. They take on a tremendous appeal and beauty far beyond the level of nostalgia. However, that's impersonal; it isn't your childhood home and a bedroom and all that. *Now* I love to go into an *im*personal house. I am very interested in how people live and the material mementos they leave of their lives. That all has style too, but it's preferably to me something I haven't seen before. I don't want to be associated with sentimentality of feeling.

An Introduction to Evans' Work and His Recollections

The other week a reviewer attempted to construct a picture of the 1930s by listing the names Walker Evans, Busby Berkeley and Franklin Roosevelt. While each in a curious way relates to photography, it is fascinating to consider what the name Walker Evans would evoke. In the last few years Evans' photography, through which he probed the physical and psychological environment of the '30s, has come to represent the era even more vividly than memory, a fitting testament to this highly selective and interpretative artist.

The power of such art to evoke the image of a whole period relates to the photographer's genius in selection. In an analogy rather close to the Darwinian thesis, it may be said that the corpus of Evans' work is reflective of a process of natural selection. From all the visual data, Evans isolated subjects which he then carefully refined, so that like biological modifications, they were transmitted to us as the most vital and the most suitable. These subjects do not merely show a period, they symbolize it.

Walker Evans was a man of acute visual perception. He had a profound sense of the American myth and a marvellous sensitivity to materials. He has become the progenitor of the contemporary approach to photographing which is most frequently referred to as documentary. However, this term is extremely ambiguous and it should be used with caution. In Evans' photographs his subjects are not stereotyped or sentimentalized, but displayed in terms of their inherent qualities and meanings. In stressing the importance of the subject, especially the presence and factual identity of that subject in relation to its social environment, Evans offers us a picture which in formal terms is organically unified around the subject. His photographs strike us as more powerfully revealing of a specific period in time than those by many of his colleagues, and it is the static, frontal approach which Evans adopted that constitutes the measure of his realism. The self-conscious framing and frontality of an Evans image exploits the fragmenting properties of photography by calling attention not only to the specificity of the angle, and to the edge of the photograph, but precisely because of this, to the world outside of the picture's limits. One is forcefully made aware that in every way the subject extends beyond what is pictorially presented; that a world exists beyond the world of the image and it is not the realism of the image that provokes this awareness, but precisely its measure of stylization.

This stylization, which has been identified as unique to Evans, cannot be defined as simply showing things as they are. Evans, as he did again in this last conversation, always insisted that the photographer remain outside of his work. But in saying this he recognized the precise stylization of his detachment, and he also knew how completely he permeated his pictures such that they could not be separated from him. Even his later photographs taken on New York subways with a concealed camera demonstrate this fact. The mistake so many have made is to assume that there is no style at all. In part this may be because even the moral values which Evans expressed were so universal that they appeared not to be of Evans, but of every one of us. In the projection of his style, from his first pictures in 1928, when he was 24, to the last, Evans did not develop; he simply continued. When he began he had both his themes and his form.

The volume of Walker Evans' pictures from the Farm Security Administration files in the Library of Congress, is a document of considerable importance for it uniquely chronicles the concept of precise selection which has thrust Evans to the forefront of 20th century photographers (*Walker Evans Photographs for the Farm Security Administration 1935-1938* [Da Capo; $25, $8.95 paper]). The book reproduces the entire *oeuvre* of Evans' three years with the FSA, from 1935 to 1938. It graphically demonstrates the photographer's personal dialogue between selection and rejection, and it beautifully illustrates how some photographs do emerge almost perfect. To my knowledge no such volume of photographs, reflective of this sort of catalogue *raisonné* approach, exists for any other photographer, and I understand that Evans was not too pleased with its publication. The artist should have the right to edit his own critical perceptions, but from the standpoint of our need to understand the medium, and of how Evans has come to dominate his field, this work is of major import. It is the sort of thing we need more than the artist. The artist already knows what he has done. This book should not be confused with a pictorial art book, for while the reproductions are of adequate study quality, their importance lies in their totality and their relation one to the other like pieces of an archaeological mosaic. The editors of the book, however, have tried to accommodate both conceptions, and 63 photographs are reproduced in the classic pictorial format of one to a page and then the entire collection of 488 images is reproduced within ruled spaces approximately three by six inches, three to

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a page. Jerald Maddox's text is informative but not integral to the real content of the book. The book may also be used as a catalogue for ordering prints from the Library.

Two of Evans' most lasting and complete contributions to the conception of his time are the volumes, *American Photographs* (1938) and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (authored with James Agee and published in 1941). In having this complete record of Evans' FSA photographs we come as near to having preparatory studies by an artist for a finished work in photography as one can. In photography the act of selection is primary and private, both in the field and in terms of final presentation. Usually only the photographer knows what were his options. We can now see concretely that Evans' eye was so fine for the organization and sequencing of each of his books that nothing in them could profitably be changed. It also points out how fundamental the book format was to the conception of his work. He saw it both in its literate and literary sense, and while he felt the photograph could not be "a story," he used the book for precisely this purpose. Evans' pictures were always published in a contextual format, from his first book, *The Bridge*, with Hart Crane's poetry, to the essays in the pages of *Fortune*. This new publication presents what we rarely have in the medium—evidence of what was left out. Left out of certain photographs and included in others, and left out of the selection process in sequencing the books. We come to understand the enormous challenge which he faced in making photographs out of the very ordinariness of his subjects; for instance, look inside of Floyd Burrough's home in Hale County, Alabama or at Frank Tengle's front porch and one will come to understand the structure of Evans' stylized seeing and the measure of his morality. Like all art, photography is composed of making value judgments and of solving problems.

Evans is one of the few photographers of the first half of the 20th century to have sufficient public documentation of his life and ideas to provide for their reading. With Atget, Evans' visual mentor, so little is known that one questions nearly every aspect about him with the exception of the existence of his work. Stieglitz, one of the other distinctive photographers of the century, is still something of a mystery though his correspondence, now in the Yale University Library but as yet unpublished, is infinitely revealing of the man and his work. The publication here of the transcript of Evans' last public talk is significant for both his biography and the study of the medium. Evans' observations are important because they give insight into his work and his recollection of events and goals. In this context Evans' views on Stieglitz are revealing, and in attempting to clarify Evans' work in terms of documentary or art, it is relevant to discuss the two in some detail.

Evans always regarded Stieglitz with a certain disdain, feeling his estheticism was too egocentric. It was difficult for Evans to realize the battles Stieglitz had won for photography because they were all over by the time he came on the scene and the fact that these victories, in a way, enabled him to begin. I cannot accept Evans' statement when he says that even early on he was never bothered by whether or not his pictures were art. It seems to me that Evans was always closer to Stieglitz than he cared to admit. In their approaches each believed in the spirituality which is inherent in objects; that to see beneath the appearances of surfaces is to reach a greater truth. The camera, which begins with appearances, can, when respected, reveal these inner meanings. Truth was to be discovered as much as it was to be constructed. In subject selection each man found the point of departure for his beliefs. Values were set by what one made a picture of. Stieglitz expressed his humanity through the subjects which were meaningful to him. Evans did also.

What Evans found most problematic with Stieglitz was in reconciling what he felt to be a contradiction between Stieglitz's idealized esthetics and his concepts of social equality. Evans, like so many of his artistic colleagues of the decade, believed in the nobility of poverty. It was not the economic poverty of their own lot, which was indeed a fact, but the poverty of others. These artists sought out the places where the potential for this expression was most visibly apparent—the poor South and the tenement streets of New York. This historical advocacy lead Evans to the style of his work which, like his subjects, was pure, direct, spare and sharp. He sought to find the fiber of spiritual substance beneath the surface of things in order to express his rejection of the dichotomy thought to exist between economic poverty and spiritual wealth. To Evans' credit he never succumbed to a romanticism of poverty or a burlesque of its seriousness. But he

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also preached no corrective which was, of course, one reason why he was outside of the main thrust of the documentary movement which surrounded him in that time of political reform. It is also why Evans is now seen as the most substantive documentary photographer of the period.

Nature, which was more to Stieglitz's liking, held little interest for Evans who said, "I am fascinated by man's work and the civilization he's built. In fact, I think that's *the* interesting thing in the world . . . ." He might have referred to the certain rationality of civilization as compared with the irrationality of nature. In this sense Evans could not accept the capricious photographic accident or make such images as Stieglitz's "equivalents." I do not think, however, that he fully understood Stieglitz's cloud pictures or recognized that their approaches to the medium were really very similar. Stieglitz's stylization was not that far removed from Evans', for whom abstraction and realism—seemingly categorical opposites—were unified in a purely photographic synthesis.

Evans' description and stylization of facts was as personal and as esthetic as that of Stieglitz, or indeed of Flaubert, the writer he most admired. As an FSA photographer Evans never really fit into the scheme of the group. His pictures were too abstract to be illustration which, as we all know, shows us only what is already known. They were not considerations of facts as facts, but realistic statements of literary symbolism. Locating and judging a subject is an act of personal responsibility, because the artist identifies with what he sees by photographing it, and he in turn is identified with it. Evans, when speaking of freedom is referring also to the responsibility of the photographer who intrudes on privacy and "takes away" the owner's property by photographing. He made these people and artifacts so thoroughly his own that we now locate them most clearly in his photographs, and, if we could encounter them again, we would see them through his eyes. He appropriated whole aspects of our society and gave them back to us as only he could discern them, and in so doing his photographs confer reality upon their subjects.

Peter C. Bunnell

Peter C. Bunnell is McAlpin Professor of the History of Photography and Modern Art, and Director of The Art Museum at Princeton University.

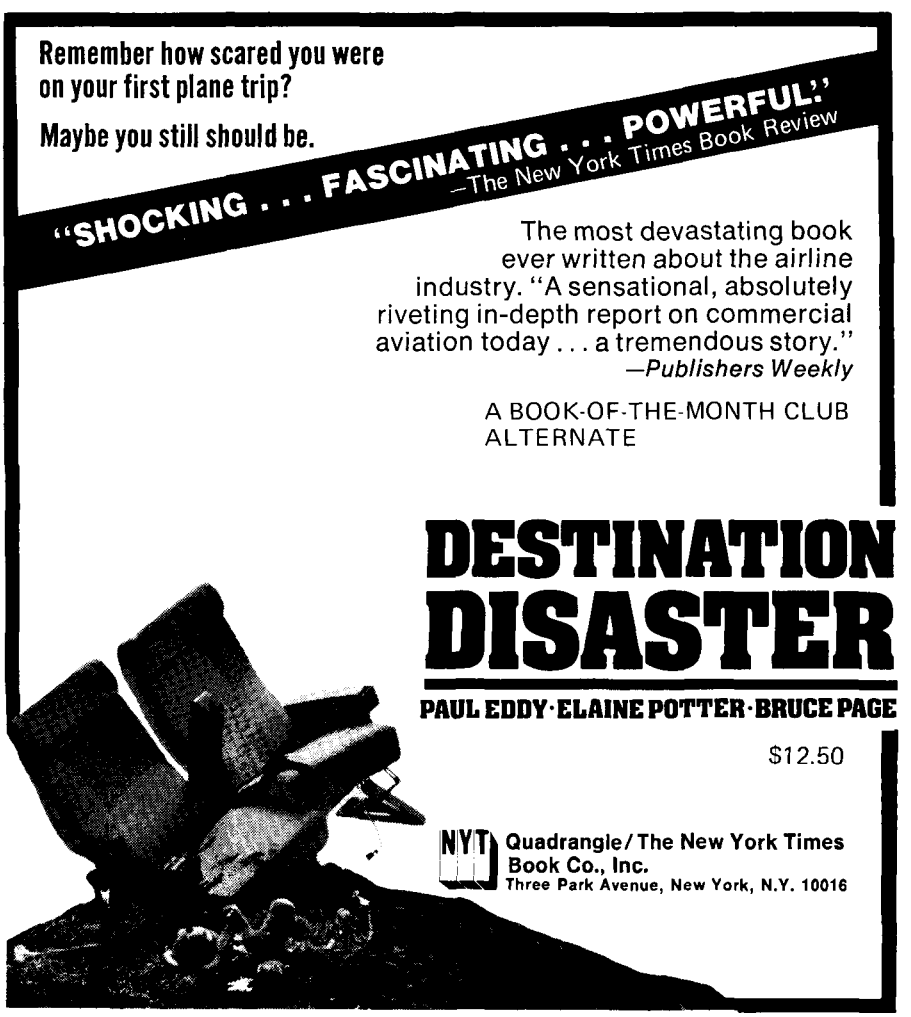
Books Considered

de Meyer
ed. by Robert Brandau
(Knopf; $25)

Nijinsky Dancing
by Lincoln Kirstein
(Knopf; $29.95)

Cartier-Bresson once said, wistfully, that photographers deal with things that are continually vanishing. But photography of the sort featured in this collection of 72 photographs by Baron Adolf de Meyer looks more often like the contrivance of things that were never meant to be. De Meyer was born in 1868 and little is known about him prior to his marriage in 1899 to Olga Alberta Caracciolo. The middle name was a reminder to would-be condescenders—they were apparently always at the ready—that she was the goddaughter of Edward VII, and for reasons so little obvious as to suggest that she might in fact be his daughter illegitimately. Through Olga, de Meyer found it easier to move in the circle of great ladies whose photographs were appearing, as had his wife's, in lavish albums called "Books of Beauty," and with her came a title—he was made a baron by the King of Saxony as a favor to cousin Bertie who would not otherwise have found it discreet to invite commoners, so mysteriously related, to his coronation. If de Meyer needed influence it was social, not artistic. By nature he was inclined to the styles of the esthetic movement of the '80s and '90s and to Art Nouveau. There is an emphatic hostility in his work to the blemishes known as reality. He liked silvery or blurred finishes, and favored a blatant use of back-lighting to create halo effects around his models or the ethereality to be found in the frequently reproduced portrait of Helen Lee Worthing modeling a wedding dress in 1920.

From beginning to end glamor, chic, theatricality were what mattered whether in his portraits of aristocratic women, in his photographs of ballet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dancers other than Nijinsky, or his work in advertising for Condé Nast. Probably the first of the important photographers to make his talents available to fashion magazines, he was with *Vogue* from 1915 to 1928, and was succeeded there by Steichen when he chose to move to *Harper's Bazaar*. He has none of Steichen's realistic-visionary wholesomeness, and cannot be imagined doing the sort of photograph for Jergens Lotion in which Steichen shows the hands of a woman peeling potatoes but insisted that they should be the hands of a woman who had actually done her own housework. The women in de Meyer's photographs for advertising are as much in the tradition of Art Nouveau as were the society ladies of Edward's court. Thus the first plate in this collection, an advertisement for Elizabeth Arden, is as provocatively stylized as is the portrait of Lady Ottoline Morrell, who is made to look startlingly like Oscar Wilde. Rising out of the white toweling that covers both the bottom of the advertising photo and the shoulders of the model, is a slight exposure of neck and then a Madonna-like, tanned face of chiseled perfection. Above the exposed forehead, coming down over the ears and then under the chin, framing the face with its deeply shadowed, expressionless eyes, is a white nun-like wrapping, and clasping the top of the head, with a delicate but nonetheless apparent pressure, is the manicured hand of a cosmetician whose forearm plunges down through a shaft of white light from the top margin of the photograph.

It is remarkably clean and beautiful work; it could also be witty. But de Meyer is not in any sense a witty photographer. No one with a sense of humor could be as devoted as he was to the cult of the fashionably beautiful. The religious figurations and overtones of the piece are clearly derived from his earliest influences. They belong to Pater, and to the efforts of the esthetic movement to appropriate all the trappings of religion to the cult of style and the worship of Beauty. It is as much a work of "art" as is the stunning drawing I recently saw of Mrs. Stuart Merrill by Jean Delville, a French painter of Art Nouveau. In colored chalk on paper he, too, worked—the date was 1892—toward a wondrous combination of refinement and exoticism, of stylization of dress and posture that is meant to suggest a feminine mystique that at the same time repels sexuality. Something similar is true of de Meyer's male figures. Except for Nijinsky, the men are divested of bodies by a haloing effect around the heads, which are in any case almost all in profile. Everything below the neck is usually shaded so heavily in dark that any natural draping of the clothing is invisible. This is as true of his portrait of Charles Chaplin as of George Arliss, and the one full male figure, shown in this book, called "Portrait of A Man," is of an outrageously slinky popinjay, left hand on his hip holding his gloves, right hand holding a top hat and cane, his long figure, in morning dress, framed in a luxurious double window that opens on to a garden in which some pale trees can just barely be discerned; the furniture in the room comes across as in an etching rather than in a photograph, so that everything is denied any sort of edge in a light that was probably diffused by the use of stretched gauze.

One could think, for contrast, of the work of the American Dorothea Lange, who can photograph two working men talking, in John Szarkowski's fine collection of 100 photographs from the Museum of Modern Art (*Looking at Photographs*), so as to let you know the shape of their upper bodies, and all the character expressed in the way they are held, by the very turns and wrinkles of the shirts they are wearing. But the works of Lange, or Arbus, or the great Walker Evans, or Brassai ("the eye of Paris," said Henry Miller) are intended to serve as social history. De Meyer, however, wants to divest his work of the threat, even of the evidences of time. From the outset he showed a partiality for printing in sepia—a taste faithfully honored in this collection—which was meant even in the 1890s to be the tint of nostalgia, of old daguerreotypes. Beauty was the more lovely, to him, when he could bring it close to the point of fading out, of expiration. And Cecil Beaton made a telling remark when he said that de Meyer, with his soft focus lens, "was not afraid of producing an almost empty photograph."

An introduction which would try to get at the social-cultural significance of de Meyer's work would require far more precision and tact than is displayed here by Philippe Jullian in his introductory biographical and interpretive essay. "Symbolism," "Surrealism" ("The de Meyers had not taken up Surrealism . . ."), and "the Pre-Raphaelite movement," are mentioned as if everyone should have at least one of them, and there is far too much confidence that we will chuckle knowingly when told, for instance, that the clothes of the eccentric Marchesa Casati "owed more to Gustave Moreau than to Poiret." The whole essay is curiously unbalanced in tone, diligent and dizzy by turns. There is a good deal of confused huffing and puffing about the decline of all things rare beginning around 1880: "The cardinals' trains have been shortened, the oratorios have been silenced, the gold has been smeared with gray." And somehow those partly responsible are the Jews ("Chic and snobbery both were born in a changing society, and those who practiced it were less often aristocrats than people aping aristocracy. Thus the most accomplished examples were to be found among the Jews"), and the homosexuals ("It has been said that the decline of civilization can be measured by the importance of the role played by its homosexuals" while "Scandals are transformed into legend—largely through the imagination of pederasts"). Since de Meyer was half Jewish and also a careful but fully accredited homosexual, it may be that Jullian is simply collapsing cultural history into his biographical interests, but his own introduction is so anxiously "chic" while he tries to make "legend" out of a

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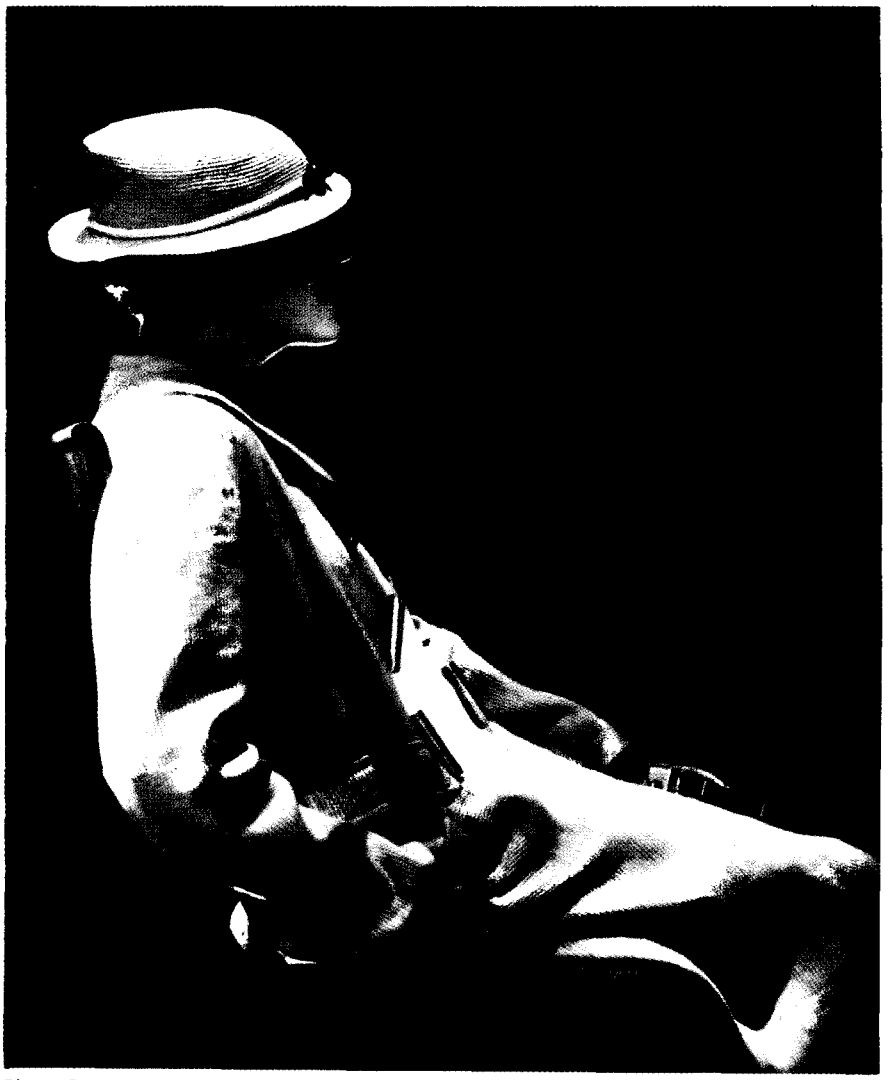
number of "scandals" that I wouldn't suppose he would care to insist that Jews and homosexuals bear sole responsibility for such things.

De Meyer's life and work do not offer a practical occasion for large conclusions about cultural decline: from aristocracy to chic in fashion, from the cult of Beauty to the International Smart Set and thence to mere Café Society. His claim to greatness will rest largely on a set of photographs which for no good reason are inadequately represented here, especially since the book is a relatively slim one. I refer to the five series of photographs taken of Nijinsky. Offered here are three single photographs only, along with five pages from de Meyer's album on *L'Après-Midi d'une Faune*, of which only a few copies are still in existence. Four of these pages are exclusively given to photographs of the nymphs rather than of Nijinsky. Perhaps it was somehow assumed that anyone who would buy this book would also own another Knopf special, Lincoln Kirstein's splendid *Nijinsky Dancing* with its plentiful and magnificent full page offerings of the de Meyer photographs. Kirstein's accompanying text is chaste, meticulously informed, in complete possession of the relevant biographical and historical material; and in its explanation of how individual genius can indeed have historical reverberations it offers telling contrast to the inadequacies of Jullian's effort on de Meyer's behalf.



Gloria Swanson *by Baron de Meyer (Courtesy Sir Cecil Beaton, Salisbury, England.)*

Jeanne Eagels

More clearly than anywhere else, we can see in these Nijinsky portraits why and in what sense de Meyer might be called a "great" photographer. The image Nijinsky projected was ideally suited to de Meyer's technique. As Kirstein points out, Nijinsky was the first dancer in history who collaborated consciously with a photographer in some expectation that his essence might thereby be caught and preserved. The work was done in the studio where controlled lighting was more easily managed than on a stage, and it finds the dancer at his peak of elegance and power. The use at times of luminous drapes as a backdrop, the flooded

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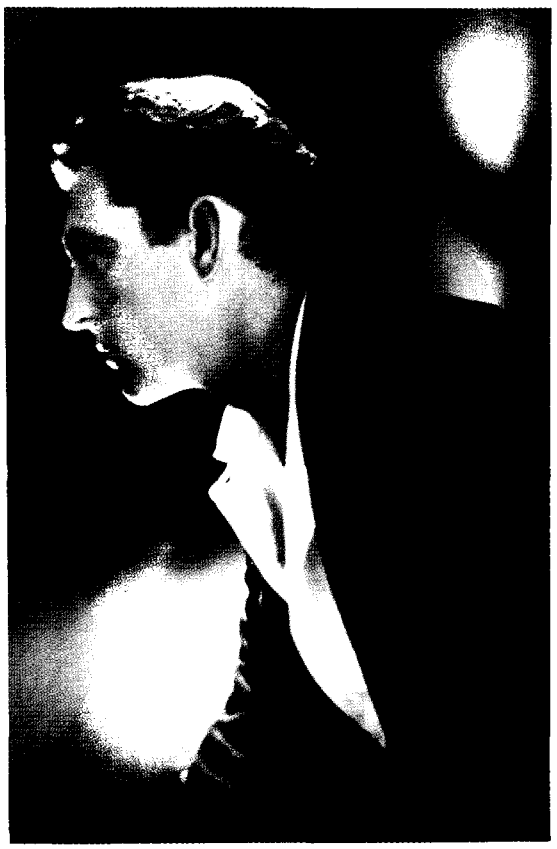
placements of light, contribute marvelously to a communicated sense of concentrated momentum, of a figure about to dissolve into the evanescent environment made to surround him. Each photograph is like a sudden flash of movement, and as a result they impart more of the illusion of motion than do, say, the motion pictures taken of Pavlova. De Meyer's special genius can be best summed up perhaps by noting that it was in large part from his photographs that Edwin Denby, in an admirable article reprinted in the Kirstein book, was able to tell us what it must have been like actually to watch Nijinsky dancing.

Richard Poirier

Richard Poirier's most recent book is a study of Robert Frost to be published next spring.

Right: Nijinsky

Below: John Barrymore



The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White
ed. by Sean Callahan
(New York Graphic Society; $7.50 paper)

Eisenstaedt's Album
by Alfred Eisenstaedt
(Viking; $16.95)

The photographs of Margaret Bourke-White include auto advertisements, assignments for *Life* and *Fortune*, farm and industrial shots and the record of many wars. The text tries to explain them in terms of the author's biography and whatever world conditions obtained at the time. Never was Lawrence's advice more needed: trust the book not the author. These are great works and need criticism. When thought of as examples of "realism" or "photo-journalism" they became as weak as the ideas which inform these categories.

One of the most effective shots is a documentary of Russian women in Magnetnaya, 1931. It denotes the poverty and strength of about a dozen women, all in shawls, in tones of gray, with gothic impersonality. But the shot has such a powerful transition from young girls to old women, such forceful relationships between a harsh life and aging into that life, that it unfolds an entire set of intuitions about the common human fate. And it does this, as Berenson once wrote of the best portraiture, without stooping to expressiveness. There are no distortions, no momentary impositions of feeling, in fact no message at all. It is simply a panel of a dozen women merging into different forms of suffering and endurance, in a very poor country, in very hard times. So that pity is mixed with admiration and uncertainty.

Everywhere in this book beauty is created out of ugliness. There are extraordinary shots of chain gangs that reveal the odd rhythm of stripes and manacles even as dispassionate reason condemns the scene. Whatever she took

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refused to obey the captions but had a life of its own: prisoners in a concentration camp who refused to become objects but whose faces and attitudes are full of awakening vitality and individual character, who refuse to remain symbols of suffering.

The text is trite beyond belief. Bourke-White's coverage of Buchenwald resulted in the complex, introspective shot that I've described; a group of men who, like the Russian women, are joined in suffering but who differ by virtue of temper and endurance and vital inertia. They are described by editors as "figures in a macabre frieze . . . a lasting testimony to the kind of hell-on-earth that only humans can create." Bad prose and bad criticism, full of morality. Look sometime at this great photograph, in which arms and legs begin to act their function, in which faces begin to show feelings, in which every attitude has some specific gravity. This is *Paradise Regained,* not *Paradise Lost.* The experience was as horrible as the critic understood, but that was not what the camera saw.

Realism has at least one liability: as a criterion it can make no distinctions, so that any object or scene or experience must be as good or art-worthy as any other. Many attempts have been made in the world of photographic criticism to offset this problem. One such is simply to deny distinctions. Another is to suggest that realism is equivalent to capturing certain subjects or feelings. A third is to reduce the perceived object to its essence, whatever that is. So that we are always in the midst of exhibitions claiming to have achieved validity through reduction. The social hostility of Avedon is presumed both to deliver a judgment on the subjects and to attain some final level of perception. But it can in general be said that the quality of art varies with the richness of its values rather than with their rightness. Avedon's diffuse anger, confused with class warfare, is satire without understanding, which is eventually only a form of insult. Great satirists have appetites and sympathies.

Great photographers have appetites and sympathies as well. Bourke-White's photographs always mean more than the captions describing them; good and evil are subordinate to perspective and composition. Her moneylenders and fascists are interesting, while poverty and death become sublimated by form. This will discourage those who seek affirmations. But if in this rare case photography attains to art, it takes on the ability to mean more than what is said about it.

It's harder to review Eisenstaedt's book because there is so much less to it. Supposedly a review of his life and acquaintance it is in fact a collection of pictorial autographs. Hemingway on his yacht, Presidents and politicians in their offices. All interspersed with their quoted praise for the photographer. Most of it unbearable as the great seek phrases to prove that what they are good at translates into appreciation and good judgment and recognition that a photograph is an act of life. Frank Lloyd Wright sounding like a Hallmark card, Christiaan Barnard proving that a gracious sentiment means almost nothing at all.

Some of this stuff is unbelievable. Movie stars are mixed in with novelists; musicians sit around looking compositional; and next to every shot a sentiment in the original photographed script. Cloris Leachman tells Eisenstaedt he is terrific, and Neil Simon tells him he is the best and Rachel Carson says he too is a naturalist and best wishes from Lauritz Melchior and Douglas MacArthur. I've read it and still can't believe it: a combination of Sardi's wall and pictures of the Ohio State Rose Bowl team of 1943.

That's the good part; the photos are awful. Fake realism with flat shadows from the flashbulb backstage. Glossies of famous people eating. Deep contrast for musicians rehearsing, looking serious. Props, my God, props: cigars and pipes and two people holding documents at each other and writers looking out of windows at horizons. Eleanor Roosevelt's teeth and Charles Boyer's cigarette, Helen Hayes with a script and Tommy Hitchcock holding a polo club and most of all and worst of all thousands of important people looking serious as they think, compose, muse, dictate, write, perform, rehearse and mug every known tropism for creative activity. Sweating, grunting, straining, the book lurches toward its finale, a boffo shot of Lillian Hellman looking wise "the summer she was working on *Scoundrel Time,*" and Art Buchwald, and Sophia Loren and Carlo Ponti looking very happy together: the *Family of Man* for celebrities, a book produced only for those in it.

Ronald Berman

Ronald Berman is chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Berggasse 19 Sigmund Freud's Home And Offices, Vienna 1938 Photographs by Edmund Engelman

(Basic Books; $25)

When Sigmund Freud fled Vienna in June 1938, he left to the Nazis the residence and offices he had occupied at Berggasse 19 for 47 years. Here, psychoanalysis had its agonizing birth, in Freud's self-analysis, and grew into the pre-eminent 20th century theory of human nature. The historic importance of the place prompted one of Freud's associates, August Aichhorn, to "make an exact record" of the rooms shortly before Freud departed, so a museum could be created there "when the storm of the years is over"—something not begun until 1969.

For three tense days, Aichhorn's young friend, Edmund Engelman, snapped pictures outside and inside, avoiding the frail and disquieted Freud and denying himself flash and floodlights for fear of provoking the suspicious Nazis who constantly watched the house. When Freud happened upon him, the tension eased a little, and the old "conquistador," as he once named himself, even posed for some somber and affecting portraits.

These pictures display little evidence of an artist's will imposed upon shadows, angles, composition, reflections, haze or even, in some instances, focus, because Engelman was confined not just to documentary purposes but to the normal light of the rooms and physical arrangements he could not disturb. But since he wanted to present "things the way Freud saw them," these restrictions did not defeat his intentions. The result, with the exception of some artful views of Freud's antiquities, is a collection of ingenuous photographs suited to a family album.

Fortunately, this album contains scholarly notes identifying the objects in each picture and relating them to Freud's life and ideas. It also includes a brief memoir by Engelman recalling those extraordinary days and Freud's gentle temper at the end of his Viennese career, just a year before his death. And there is a lucid and informative introduction by Peter Gay remarking the interplay of Freud's character, thought and culture.

But the pictures tell their own story, and that concerns a bourgeois

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From *Berggasse 19* (Basic Books)

Photographs by Edmund Engelman

gentleman who had promised his future wife, in 1882, "a little world of happiness, of silent friends and emblems of honorable humanity," where they could "pass our life in calm happiness for ourselves and earnest work for mankind." Freud fulfilled this promise with a home and offices that exuded coziness, comfort and tranquility. And although this environment seems at odds with the revolutionary ideas Freud developed there, the paradox is not baffling, for, as Peter Gay observes, who but a traditional bourgeois, sensitive to rigid restraints, would know the power of restraints and the power of their enemies?

Engelman's photos also suggest the opposite relation of bourgeois life to psychoanalysis. In an environment where flesh and feelings could relax amid the pleasures of soft furniture, humid warmth, appealing smells, familiar faces and objects, emotions could rise to the surface and seek satisfactions denied them elsewhere. These satisfactions dot the pages of memoirs and fiction—*e.g.*, Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Hermann Hesse's *Demian*, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. But since all feelings are not pleasing, this same environment could engender conflict, for it was, as one historian has called it, a place of "explosive intimacy." Nineteenth century bourgeois manners and morals may have spelled public restraint, but the bourgeois home, for good or ill, breathed private release.

At Berggasse 19, the domestic rooms (Engelman photographed only the dining room, the family sitting room, and the sitting room of Freud's sister-in-law) and Anna Freud's consulting room were conventionally comfortable, with touches of feminine elegance in graceful furniture, patterned fabrics, and delicate objects. But Freud's offices were more than conventionally comfortable: they were womb-like, especially the consulting room, which physically suggested its purpose as a laboratory of the unrepressed. Carpets lay upon carpets, carpets covered tables, a carpet hung on the wall adjacent to the couch, which rested beneath another carpet, blankets and cushions. At one end of the couch, where the patients' feet would lie, stood a tile stove equipped with water pipes to supply humidity. At the head, hidden behind a mountain of pillows and in the corner of the room, was the large, graceless easy chair where Freud sat to listen.

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Along the walls of both the consulting room and the study next door, were bookcases and pictures of people and mythical scenes. And there were antiquities—mainly funerary objects and mythological sculptures from Egypt, Cyprus, Greece and Italy—everywhere: on tables, in separate cases, atop bookshelves, even in front of books; Freud's desk alone held some 20 statues which faced him as he wrote (in an arrangement later exactly reconstructed at Freud's London home).

It seems odd at first that no modern art appears in the collection of this quintessentially modern thinker, since artists of his day, in Vienna as elsewhere, were known for expressing states of mind and emotion. But Freud had only contempt for abstract and expressionistic painting and sculpture, frequently deriding its creators as foolish, false and affected. And this taste further confirms the relation between Freud's bourgeois way of life and his psychological revolution: Freud sought to resolve genuine conflicts through the release of genuine feelings, not merely to nurture anti-social self-dramatization.

Hence Freud's antiquities belonged to his "earnest work." As Gay says, they symbolized Freud's identification with the archaeologist who penetrates layers of the past in search of truth. But Freud also used them to illustrate to patients his theories of dreams and the unconscious; and he associated them with an instinctual life beyond the dense manners, restraints and affectations of modern society. In combination with the enclosed, insistently comfortable rooms that they cluttered, these artifacts embodied an emotional freedom Freud idealized as a form of health, and of which he found a hint in man's love of animals, as he wrote in 1936: "the simplicity of a life free from the almost unbelievable conflicts of civilization, the beauty of an existence almost complete in itself."

Nothing in Engelman's photographs is more remarkable than this kinship of bourgeois comfort, ancient art and psychoanalysis; for these pictures artlessly show that Freud penetrated bourgeois restraints with the aid of bourgeois indulgence.

James Sloan Allen

James Sloan Allen teaches European intellectual history at the Manhattan School of Music and the New School for Social Research.

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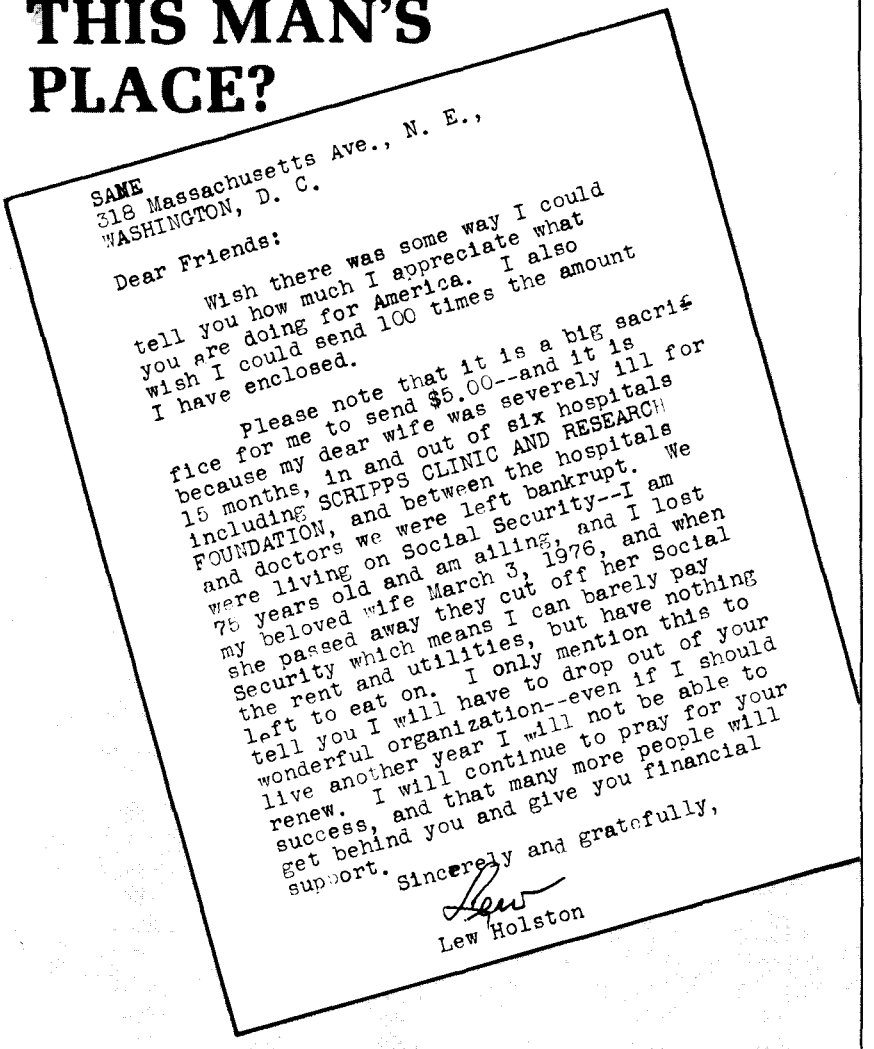

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The American Monument Photographs by Lee Friedlander

(Eakins Foundation Press; $50)

Two years ago John Szarkowski of the Museum of Modern Art mounted a major show of the photographs of Lee Friedlander. Szarkowski anointed Friedlander the most important of '60s photographers and credited his "clinically objective photographic manner" with producing "false documents full of elegance and irony." Coming from the Modern's photo czar, these were words that were taken seriously, and Friedlander's example has become a dominant one for younger photographers.

Included in the Modern's show were a group of pictures showing monuments of various sorts, from a sculptured World War I doughboy to giant plastic cattle put on pedestals in the heart of beef country. Friedlander seemed to gently mock these monuments, to hint that they too were false documents of history and heritage.

It turns out that Friedlander's interest in monuments has been a 10-year fascination, which has now resulted in a fancy, big book including some 213 images. *The American Monument* announces itself straightforwardly, suggesting a documentary survey, perhaps one of the more reasonable projects inspired by a Bicentennial year. In fact the collection alternates uneasily between literalism and irony, true documents and false.

In his artistic photographs Friedlander has been above all the master of the centerless picture. His photos catch things out of the corner of the camera eye. They show a dispersed, diverse American scene held together only by the consciousness of the recording observer; they imply a world where visual—and perhaps moral—values must be gleaned piece by piece, cumulatively, from dizzying variety. It is therefore ironic from the beginning that Friedlander should have become so obsessed with monuments, which are intended to give centrality both to public spaces and to the public mind. They are points of physical direction: go down to the Confederate monument and turn right. They are points of moral direction: we are all enjoined to work as hard and be as honest as Lincoln, there's his statue. Monuments reflect fundamental values which are also clichés. They are the sculptural equivalent of Fourth of July speeches.

The things monumentalized must be common reference points for values no one can disagree with: people, places or events as examples of common values. As depicted in Friedlander's book they are the expected politicians, generals, war heroes, civic heroes (fire and policemen killed in the line of duty) and the occasional poet or musician. Tom Mix is the subject of a monument in Florence, Arizona; Bill "Bojangles" Robinson is commemorated in a small nondescript square in a black area of Richmond, Virginia.

Certain idealized historical events also get monumentalized: "The End of the Famous Smoky Hill Trail" in Denver, "The Closing of the West," or battles like Vicksburg and Gettysburg, every regiment and every anecdote of heroism marked on the spot. Heroes fall into a common image around the country. The equestrian Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square in Washington reappears in New Orleans—and no doubt in other cities. Friedlander carefully juxtaposes images to make such points: he combines roughly a dozen statues of doughboys, all in different settings and poses, on a page. Views documenting the variety and common traits of Confederate monuments echo Walker Evans' photos of the same subjects.

At his best, Friedlander manages to inflect his subjects with their own special ironies by the simple expedient of exiling the monuments—accustomed as they are to central placement in public attention and public places—to the edges of the frame and to busy busy backgrounds and foregrounds. Lost in a hubbub of signs and billboards they confront artifacts of the banal rather than the heroic life. Such treatment, of course, only renders the literal fate of the monuments more starkly: their plight is the fault of planners and signbuilders—and ultimately of different sensibility. Leslie Katz, editor of the book, grandiously claims in his postscript that "the more frenetic the world becomes, the calmer become the monuments. The noisier the advertisements promising instant gratification for a price, the quieter these." But of course it is not so. Friedlander is more sensitive to the humor of the situations which result. He gives us the statue of Father Duffy in Times Square, loomed over by a huge Coke ad; a doughboy statue which seems to stalk the baby carriage being pushed past it; the statue of war ace Frank Luke, Jr. on the Arizona state capitol grounds, forgotten amid beds of cultivated cactus. A bronze newsboy in Los Angeles trips through scraggly rosebushes. Theodore Roosevelt orates to an audience of huge boxwoods in Washington. Sometimes the monuments themselves provide the incongruity by combining styles: a memorial to war dead in Brattleboro, Vermont, puts a World War II helmet on a classical marble bust.

It is probably wrong to read the pictures as in any way elegies for passing values, although they clearly refer to a time when monuments were a more integral or organic part of daily life. The pleasure taken in small ironies, however, carries the pictures beyond any moral. Friedlander's full intention is less easy to determine. Some of the pictures are done very straight: one view of the Supreme Court building, for instance, could go right into a civics book. And only rarely do any signs of Friedlander's earlier, more formally self-conscious work appear. He might seem to have sworn off the mirrors, reflections and photographer's shadows captured in the image, except that many of these pictures were taken around the same time as ones containing those devices. A picture typical of that side of Friedlander, of Mt. Rushmore reflected in a visitor center window behind which people are photographing it, seems strained and out of place.

Like many photographers, Friedlander seems concerned with removing his subject matter from the contingencies of date. Monuments

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represent subjects which supposedly transcend time limits. Thus while Friedlander has normally titled his pictures with the year and the name of the place where they were taken, in this book there is only the name of the place and the name of the thing monumentalized. Friedlander hopes that he has left the need for a year behind.

He hasn't, of course, because most of these monuments are failing in their struggle against the ephemeral as the world changes around them. It is not simply neglected upkeep or inadequate zoning laws that have let them fall into ignominy, but shifting values. The photos bear witness not so much to their hypocrisy as to the gradual substitution of one set of common illusions for another. They show the naïveté of monument-making but at times they also come dangerously close to embracing it. Monuments do not transcend time, they simply symbolize a desired connection between past and present, two points along its axis. Friedlander understands this, but only part of the time.

Phil Patton

Phil Patton is on the staff of *Esquire* magazine.

The Back of the Book

Photographs by Andrea Loomis

Andrea C. Loomis was born in New York in 1943. Her photographs have appeared in *Cosmopolitan* and *Harper's*, and she has taught photography at Phoenix House in New York and at Christ Child Settlement House in Washington. Her films "Arrivals" and "America I" were shown at the New Theater. She currently is producing a film for television, "Message from the Future."

—R.R.

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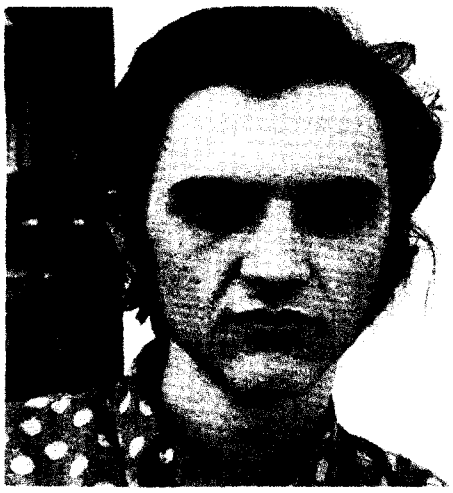

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Correspondence

Electoral TNT

To the editors:

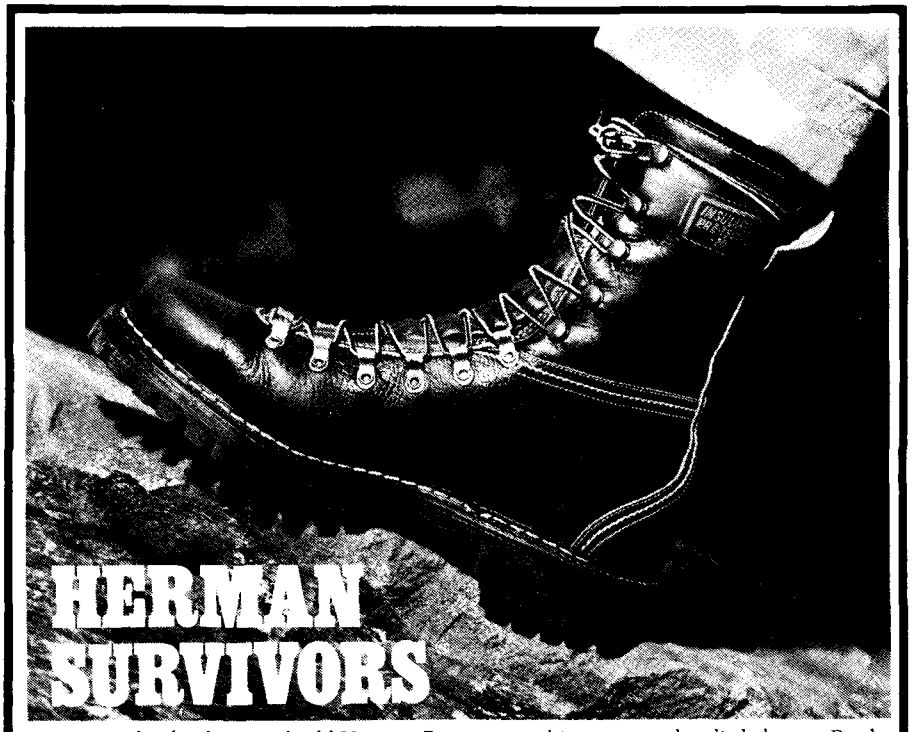
It is not surprising to see an American journalist draw attention to a distant inferno while ignoring smoldering fires nearby. However, I am both surprised and distressed to find TRB committing this error in his October 16 comments on the Electoral College. He warns that "Some day. . .the stick of dynamite in the Constitution will go off and the election will go into the House of Representatives." What TRB treats as a potential crisis is, of course, a carefully crafted provision of our constitution which would have frequently come into effect if US political customs had not so strongly discouraged minor parties. The House is, after all, a representative body (although in this case each state delegation would have one vote).

The most important question here is how to resolve multi-candidate elections in which no majority occurs, as nearly happened in 1968; TRB seems more concerned with what might have happened in 1960. For example, in 1968, suppose Humphrey were to win 40 percent of the appropriate vote (whether popular or electoral), Nixon 35 percent and Wallace 25 percent. Should Humphrey be awarded the election by virtue of minority support? Should Nixon be allowed to claim the Wallace votes by virtue of closer affinity on the issues? The answer is by no means clear. In such a case, the will of the voters has not been clearly stated, and it is quite appropriate for the responsibility to fall on the lower house to choose the head of government. In short, the risk of electing a candidate who receives slightly fewer popular votes than another must be weighed against the risk of electing a President by plurality but without the support of any majority.

But there is an appropriate compromise which minimizes both risks as well as any disruption of our constitutional system. Each state should choose electors legally pledged to the various candidates in proportion to the statewide vote. In case there is no majority, the House, with one vote per representative, should be required to choose among those candidates whose electoral votes were greater than half the largest number received by any candidate.

It is also important to the vitality of American politics for minor candidates to be able to build a following without the strong regional base required under our current system (compare the two Wallaces). TRB is right that the electoral college system needs to be changed, but he is advocating the wrong amendment.

Robert D. Gulliver, II
Minneapolis, Minnesota



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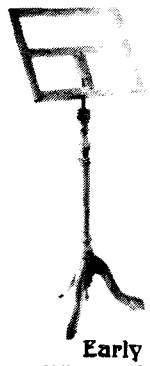

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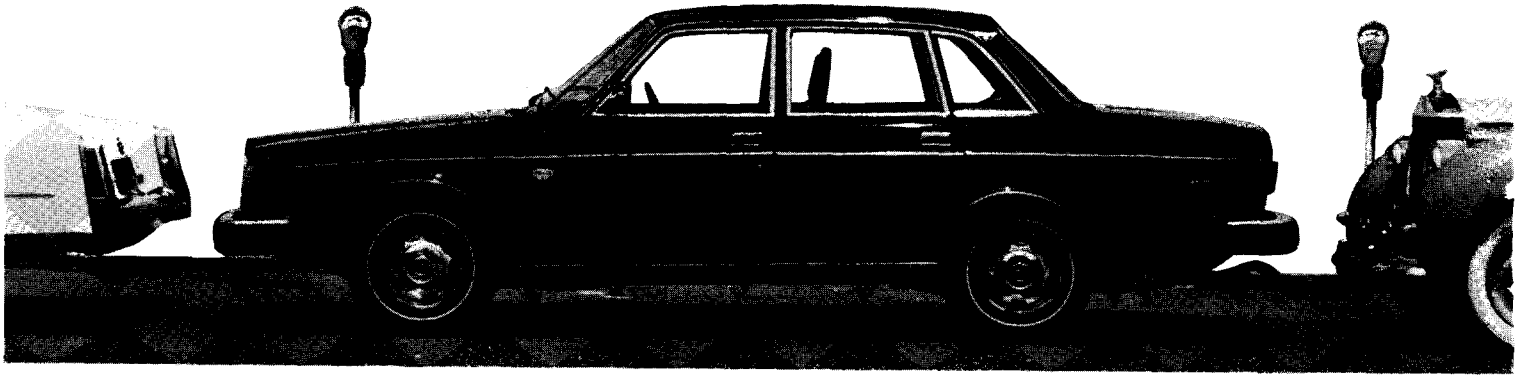

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